WHEEL-TRACKS

Photo: Maull & Fox, Ltd.

EDITH Œ. SOMERVILLE, 1922

WHEEL-TRACKS

BY
E. Œ. SOMERVILLE
AND
MARTIN ROSS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
LONDON, TORONTO
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS
1923
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[illegible] SOMERVILLE, 1922

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BY

E. Œ. SOMERVILLE

AND

MARTIN ROSS

AUTHORS OF

"SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.," "THE REAL CHARLOTTE,"

"IRISH MEMORIES," "MOUNT MUSIC"

ETC. ETC. ETC.

WITH 31 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS

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A PRELUDE

SIX years ago I set myself to gather such store of memories as I could muster, chiefly trying to tell of my cousin, Martin Ross, and of our work and our life together. And, since this was the intention of the book, I left on one side things not perhaps so much unworthy, as irrelevant.

I have heard anthropologists lament the passing of primitive and barbaric peoples, whose ways and customs had been only partly recorded. It is true that such of these as I have occasionally been instructed in have modified any regret that I might have felt for the loss of further information of a similar kind. But much depends upon the point of view, and since everything in Ireland is changing, and many things have passed away, there may be specialists who will discover interest, possibly amusement—though not, probably, much instruction—in what I can remember of my childhood, and of the old times and people that had their being before the existence of the Treaty that is responsible for the Irish Free State.

Irish ways and highways are alike impressionable and quick to receive and, still more, to retain impressions. Even though it is only a

donkey-cart that has gone along one of our soft and muddy southern roads, it will leave its wobbling tracks (always on the wrong side of the road) plain to be seen. When I was a child there were no steam-rollers in the County Cork, and wheels went round more slowly, and left deeper marks than they do now.

Before the Steam-roller of Time obliterates all the old wheel-tracks I will try and retrace a few of them.

E. Œ. SOMERVILLE.

September, 1923.

P.S.—The inclusion of some articles and letters by Martin Ross justifies me, I think, in leaving her name in its accustomed place, with mine, on the title-page.

E. Œ. S.

WHEEL-TRACKS

CHAPTER I

DRISHANE

TO look back into childhood is like looking into a wood in spring, on a sunny day, with what we call in Ireland "a light air o' wind" stirring the new-born leaves. There are the same sharp, yet often changing contrasts of sun and shadow; radiant spaces, where humble things are exalted to glory, and the foliage of the laurels glitters as if it were made of mirrors, and a slender birch-branch is as bright against the deep shade of fir-trees as if it were a flash of lightning; and spaces of baffling darkness, wherein fancy rather than sight finds food for conjecture, and, strain our eyes as we may, there is nothing to tell us what is hidden in the green gloom.

But even if the details of childhood fail us, or are at best uncertain, some impressions will hold their places in memory, and for me, among the most ineffaceable of these is the picture of what, as a child, I believed to be the most wonderful and splendid house in the world, my grandfather's old house, in which, after the patriarchal fashion of an older Ireland, my father and mother

lived with him and my grandmother, and there bred up such a family as I have heard described as being both long and serious.

It is a staid and rather formal old house, that has stood for not far short of two hundred years by the southern sea, looking west, by Cape Clear, towards America. This, for those who interest themselves in recondite matters and know something of the map of Ireland, will rightly suggest the County Cork, but it may not be considered officious (though perhaps tedious) if I add that the place I write of is in the Barony of West Carbery, and (to descend still farther into particulars) the ancient Parish of Castle Haven.

This house, and its forerunner, for there is scarcely a house in Ireland that did not, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, supplant an earlier rival, have between them seen eight generations of the same family come, and stay, and go, decently, and in a neighbourly and respectable manner. Its outward aspect, with its severe, grey, weather-slated walls, and Georgian windows, offers no compromise to beauty, and makes no secret of its contempt for picturesqueness. Even the ivy, that now covers nearly all its walls, is a comparatively modern innovation, and was, in less effete times, strictly limited to a mutton-chop whisker on either side of the hall door. But even as it is said that there is no love so deep as that that is given to a plain woman, so is the love that this plain old house has known how to inspire in its children.

It stands near the little village of Castle-Townshend, and it is called Drishane—the accepted pronunciation may be indicated as

Photo by Sir Egerton Coghill

DRISHANE IN 1885

Drish-ahn—which is a place-name that occurs in several other parts of the county. Dr. Joyce, in his book, *Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*, says the word Drishane is derived from "Dris," a briar, and means a place of brambles or a brake of briars. In the matter of material briars the lands of Drishane may have lost something of luxuriance, but spiritually, its briars are still an effective obstruction, alike in spelling and in pronunciation.

I have sometimes been required to give my name and address in a London shop. I say "Somerville," and am resigned to the certainty of a *u*, and a superfluity of *m*'s.

Then I say "Drishane."

"Will Madam spell it?"

Madam does so, and adds "Skibbereen." On which the stupefied assistant hands her the pencil.

* * * * *

Before proceeding to affairs of wider interest, it may not be thought superfluous if I touch upon an incident that—as Robert Martin said long ago—I cannot swear to, having it only on hearsay evidence—the incident of being born. This, or so I am told, occurred to me one May Sunday morning, in Corfu, where my father's regiment, "The Buffs," was quartered. My second name, Œnone, was chosen by my mother in polite recognition of the classic associations of my birthplace; and, I may add, its initial, which is all that I retain of it for daily use, has been as a rock on which the pens of many correspondents have split and foundered.

My mother, who was ever vigorous in narrative, as in most things, has assured me that my cradle was habitually rocked by earthquakes,

also, that a turn for music was early indicated by an infatuation for the big drum of the band of The Buffs. Both statements now appear to me disputable, but, if I exclude my own existence, these are the only facts that have survived from my soldiering days, and also, that The Bay did its worst to the troop-ship in which we came home, but that I, inured I suppose by earthquakes and the big drum to such commotions, was the only soul on board who looked unshaken on the tempest—if one can be counted as a soul at ten months.

. . . . .

It would be as instructive as amusing to be able now to see Drishane, its habits, and customs, and decorations, as they were when my mother brought me to live in it with her father and mother-in-law, while my father went to India with his regiment. I now believe it to have been a very typical example of an Irish house of its period, with a fair share of good old mahogany "Irish Chippendale" furniture, while its decorations exemplified what had been my grandmother's views on such matters, in or about the eighteen-twenties. It is a rash thing to condemn the taste in decoration of any period, since Time generally reverses all judgments; yet I cannot but think that I am right in my present conviction that Grandmamma's selections in wall-papers, chintzes, carpets, and trimmings generally, were all of a very solid and singular ugliness. It is true that my mother, who was young and energetic, and had an enthusiasm for the latest novelty that was irrespective of its æsthetic value, effected some superficial changes and additions, such as a flower-vase of white muffed

MY MOTHER AND I

glass, encircled by a red serpent, and with a litter of similar vaselets clinging round the maternal stem—which was one of the profoundest admirations of my infancy, and was probably one of the triumphs of the Exhibition of 1862—also a work-table of a debased Victorian type, and open windows in the nursery, by night as well as by day. But with an autocrat of the calibre of my grandmother I imagine that a daughter-in-law, however young and energetic, would not find much scope for the latter quality. I am reasonably certain that Grandmamma's views on either decoration or open windows suffered no modification, and that when I was five or six years old—from about which epoch my first recollections date—not so much as one Berlin-worsted-worked cushion had parted company from its wedded chair.

Architecturally, the house has, at least, the merit of solidity. Its rooms are lofty, and their proportions pleasant, and it is possessed of rather more originality than is usual in Irish houses of its time, in the relative positions of what house-agents impressively describe as Reception-rooms. Of these, the first that may be dealt with is the drawing-room, a place of great sanctity, wherein the foot of child never trod save by special invitation (or command, which came to the same thing). Its wall-paper was white, spaced into large diamonds with a Greek pattern of gold, and it shone like satin. It was less dashing in design than the paper of the inner hall and the staircase, whose pattern was of endless ladders of large blue and orange flowers (tropic, one believed them to be) that raged from the bottom of the house to the top, but the drawing-room was devoted to the ladies, and in

it dash gave way to refinement. Portraits of ancestresses hung round it, close to the ceiling, according to the practice of those domestic picture-hangers who hold no brief for Art. Ancestors were relegated to the dining-room, as being, I suppose, a more suitable environment for the thirstier sex. It was carpeted with a drab, and—as far as one can judge—immortal product of the looms of Brussels, such as they produced about a hundred years ago, when my grandparents visited them, and issued a lordly order for as many yards as would cover all the lower part of the house, as well as the staircase, and an upstairs sitting-room. Some intrepid survivors of those many yards still keep the floor, and show what Brussels carpeting was in the good old Waterloo days, and, incidentally, demonstrate how singularly ill-advised as a pattern for carpets an imitation of parquet can be.

Deep red moreen curtains, of almost equal immortality, draped the three high windows. There was a carved white and grey marble chimney-piece of charming design brought by my great-grandfather from Italy; no lady could require anything more austerely refined, but it, unfortunately, has been slowly destroyed by successive village masons, in the course of exhumations of the corpses of rats and mice; what one of my uncles called a mouse-oleum, having been established under the hearth-stone. (It was of this uncle, my mother's elder brother, and of his hound-like gift for locating mouseoleums, that one of the masons said, "Surely Sir Joscelyn's the illigant pilot for a shtink!")

Austere was the mantelpiece, and the furniture

was in harmony with it. Sofas upholstered in something cold, and pink, and polished, and harder than a plank-bed; chairs, dour and upright as "a black Protestant," bare sofa-tables, and a central table dedicated to what, in my grandmother's youth, was considered suitable drawing-room literature. But what I remember most distinctly is the Erard piano, and the tall threefold screen by the door, behind which I was accustomed to lurk in the last agony, when I had been pushed into the room by my nurse, to be inspected by visitors, or, later, had been commanded downstairs to exhibit my prowess on the Erard.

How despicable would this cowardice not seem to the infant of to-day! I have known one, Beatrice, aged, perhaps five, who was overheard enacting the part of her Mamma, for her own entertainment, and that of Rosemary, her younger sister. An imaginary telephone entered into the play, and an invitation to lunch was issued by the Mamma. It was accepted with effusion by the guest. The hostess exclaimed:

"Then you *will* come? That will be *delicious!* And *then* you can see Beatrice!"

CHAPTER II

GRANDMAMMA

FAR away, as it now seems to me, Grandmamma dwelt, in a stately, secluded world of her own. She was born in 1787, and she died when she was eighty-two. I can remember her only as an invalid, who ruled the household, through her Grand Vizier and housekeeper, Mrs. Kerr, from behind the Purdah screen of ill-health.

She was ten years older than my grandfather, a remarkable reversal of the usual disparity in years between husband and wife, yet, as is not seldom the case, it appeared only to intensify their love for each other. They were distant cousins, and had, I imagine, seen but little of each other until she and her sister, who, though not quite as young as they had been, were still reputed to be among the Beauties of the Day, were brought from the successes and excitements of London, to their home at Castle Townshend, and there, disastrously enough, as it turned out, both ladies fell in love with their good-looking young cousin. The story is told that on a day when all three were out with the hounds, the elder sister's horse fell, and the younger, hearing of the accident, galloped up to find her being restored to consciousness by the handsome young cousin, after the time-honoured fashion of the

Prince in the old story of The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood. As to what then occurred history is silent, but that falling-off resulted in a falling-out between the sisters, which, as was seemingly inevitable in those days of Homeric conflict, moved on majestically into an institution.

My grandmother's marriage was a very happy one, but there is tragedy in the thought of that long life lived within little more than a stone's throw of a once beloved sister, who, near at hand though she might be, was yet beyond reach of reconciliation. Of the three lives so fatally involved, my grandmother's was the first to end, and I believe the sole sign of recognition of her only sister's death that my Great-Aunt St. Lawrence permitted to herself, was that the blinds in her house in Castle Townshend were drawn down on the day of the funeral.

After Grandmamma's death I have been told by old Mrs. Kerr that my grandfather used to sit at night, for hours, by his bedroom fire, thinking, and grieving, and looking for consolation in his Bible by the light of a candle in Grandmamma's own especial silver candlestick. Mrs. Kerr said he would burn two candles in the night, and it was her duty to see they were provided. After some time, he complained that, night after night, the second candle was not to be found. "But my dear child," said Mrs. Kerr, "*The candle was there!* for I always put it on his table myself! It was Herself that took it, the way your Grandpapa should go to his bed and not be sitting there all night, breaking his heart."

* * * * *

In memory, the feeling to me of Grandmamma

is as of a little, fragile grey shell, a worn-out carbon "mantle" that has once burned with brilliant light; but will burn no more. This was a new generation, whose ways were not her ways. She was still potent, and she knew it, but she was tired of the world, too tired to care to use her power, even though the reputation of a very incisive tongue, combined with unfaltering courage, and with the prestige of a past as "a Beauty of the Court of the Regent," made of her not only a power, but something also of a terror.

CUDDLE OR COZY
(From an album of 1840)

For me, however, she had no terrors. Her four-poster bed, her sofa, or her bath-chair, whose step I shared with the reigning little white dog, Cuddle or Cozy —(these names were hereditary, and alternated immutably)—were places of unassailable sanctuary, no matter of what crime I might have been guilty. The demoralizing position of Head Pet, with both Grandpapa and Grandmamma was mine, and naturally I made the most of it. Grandmamma would have what she called her trinket-case brought to her for me to play with, and I used to sit on her bed, rioting in its contents; not seldom the *séance* would end by her giving me something that I now know to have been fanciful

and charming, and that I then seem to have lost with all possible celerity, since even their memory is faint. But although I lost a little mother-o'-pearl cat with eyes of emerald, and a little horse with ruby eyes, and a dove, like the dove in the Psalms, that was covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold, and a ring with a slide of two clasped hands that lifted and revealed a plait of what must have been a fairy's hair, and a tiny old French watch, of gold, with Cupids and torches engraved on it and diamond sparks round its convex face, and a silver Bible, half an inch square, that was, perhaps, a receptacle for patches, and more also that I now forget, some relics of that casket of enchantment still exist, and among these are a lovely old ring with a ruby set with diamonds, and a ring of little pearls that spin on pivots all round one's finger, and a watch, whose back of translucent skyblue enamel, with gold stars in the sky, has, alas! a bare space on it, where enamel and stars are both gone, because I, aged perhaps, ten, dropped it on the gravel during a scrimmage with my fellow-roughs.

Grandmamma, as I first remember her, when she was still able to come downstairs, always wore black silk (or was it sometimes, grey poplin?) and a white cap with many little loops of white satin ribbon on either side of her face, and a couple of shining grey curls were arranged in front of the cap frill. When I think of her face, I think of ivory and velvet, and I can see her thin, tiny hands, almost transparent, with a green bead ring, that I had made, and formally presented to her on her birthday, riding loose on one of her fingers. I can only once remember seeing her even ruffled in temper, and that was

when, from her sofa by her sitting-room window, she espied me in ardent converse with old Tim Hallahane, an expert mower, whose scythe, in those days before mowing machines, kept the grass tidy. Tim was expounding to me the perils of the Castlehaven road and their concentration at the spot, at the end of Uncle Harry's Wood, known as the Fairies' Gap. Jerry Minnahane, who worked in the garden, would not go home alone after dark. It was a stirring theme. But Grandmamma could not know that. She called sharply to Tim to go on with his work, and summoned me to her, and when I came in she said I was not to "talk to the men about the place and be turned into a brogueaneer!"*

It was the epitome of the eighteenth century; but old Tim, being no more "class-conscious" than I, resented the incident not at all. (Nor, I may admit, did the prohibition have much practical effect.)

Eighteenth century in many of her ideals though Grandmamma was, she possessed a weakness that was quite out of her period; she was devoted to dogs, and the devotion seems to have been a family characteristic. There is a pastel portrait of her father, Richard Townshend of Castle Townshend, Member for the County in the last Irish Parliament, known in his day, in a country apt at nicknames, as The Munster Peacock, and, Peacock though he may have been—(and nothing, alive or dead, has ever terrified my dogs as has a peacock, whirling his tail in a fan in their faces)—an adoring spaniel gazes at his well-turned leg with a passion that one feels must have been reciprocated.

* A family term of disapproval, applied to exponents of the tune and *patois* of the peasants.

In a pale, pretty old water-colour of Grandmamma at the age of eighteen, a little Blenheim spaniel is with her, and its name "Quiz" is duly inscribed with hers on the back of the frame. Her sister, Mrs. St. Lawrence, adored dogs; my father was a thrall to his, and one of Grandmamma's nieces would go to greater lengths on behalf of her dogs than even he or I. I have seen my Cousin G—— at a luncheon party, convey, as she believed unobserved, tit-bits from her plate to her pocket (frankly, her pocket), for the regaling of her dogs on her return; and, in her house, the visitor, ranging unawares among her many treasures, would, in some delicate piece of old china or gold enamelled snuff-box, come upon an ancient cutlet bone, or a mouldy morsel of cake, put aside for the delectation of the favourite, and forgotten. I have stayed with her during the sway of a small black creature, so old that it had lost all senses save that of smell (which was perceptible only to others). It chanced, one morning, that a yellow village dog broke in upon the refined seclusion of the Zutie, who, after a brief assumption of reserve, joined it, regardless of her years and position, in a mutual *pas de fascination*. Cousin G—— was of the early time of Victoria, but, as in the case of my Grandmother and Tim Hallahane, the eighteenth century welled up in her.

"A little, fair-haired, village cur to presume to play with the Zutie!" she exclaimed. "I felled it to the earth with a horrid oath!"

Grandmamma had the unusual good sense to prefer the ladies of the race to the gentlemen. I have heard of the owner of a large property, who, greatly desiring a male heir, found himself for the second time the father of a daughter.

He is said to have received the news in much the same spirit as my grandfather Coghill, who, on the birth of his seventh daughter (little thinking that three more would come to him in the fullness of time) remarked "More rubbish!" This gentleman's brother, however, writing to him in honour of the event, said "I do not pretend to condole with you, my dear Robert, for I consider the female to be by far the more amiable sex!"

Grandmamma had a succession of Cuddles and Cozies of whom my own well-loved little Candy was a typical descendant, all ladies, and all, I believe, white, and small, and smooth-haired, and short-nosed, as were the fox-terriers of the time. She made numberless drawings of them, in elegant gilt-edged "Albums" of tinted paper, but she was not, apparently, content with these records, for among the collection of family miniatures there is a portrait of one of the Cozies, a saintly and dove-like little dog, with a round white head, and "foxed" yellow ears, and a yellow-patched eye, and a beak like a dove. It is framed in gold, with a round crystal at the back, and behind the crystal there is a little scrap of coarse white hair, tied with blue silk.

CHAPTER III

THE BIG MASTER

FROM the pleasant thought of Grandmamma, and her long succession of little white dogs, I return (not without pleasure also), to the survey of Drishane.

The house was dominated by severity and uniformity, yet in spite of these it remained lovable. The Brussels drab carpet, and the red moreen went through it, all-pervading as the air. In the dining-room and the ante-room the prevailing drab was repeated in the wall-paper, and the red moreen was draped in valances that hung in heavy curves from gilded poles above and between the windows. The study, which was my grandfather's sitting-room, had been converted by him from a square into an octagon, four of its facets being book-cases filled with books that no one had ever read, or could ever want to read, with but few possible exceptions, among these being—(as is hardly necessary to say)—the long array of bound volumes of *Punch*, a complete set, save for the first two years.

At certain times of stress, such as whooping-cough, or the interregnum between governesses, it was my mother's practice to administer to us, as solaces and silencers, volumes of *Punch*, and a more intensive educator for the young than

Mr. Punch could hardly be found. Assiduously I copied in pen and ink John Leech's and Georgina Bower's hunting pictures; Tenniel's cartoons are graven deep in my mind, and what little I know of Victorian politics was learned from them.

The earlier volumes did not interest us, and later research has not made their appeal more apparent. It is very hard to believe that people laughed at those extravagantly ill-drawn caricatures, or were amused by the nagglings of "The Naggletons." One of the stock jests of the early life of *Punch* appears to have been the setting forth of the trials and sufferings of a husband, what time his wife was amusing herself upstairs with the very practical joke of "presenting" him—that was the accepted phrase —with twins.

That anyone should have persisted in subscribing to the *Punch* of the eighteen-forties, is a pathetic witness to the aridity of its contemporaries. I imagine that my grandfather began to do so because it was new, and he liked novelties, and continued, because once he had formed a habit he never broke it (being a singular mixture of Radicalism and Conservatism). Whatever may have been his reason, the habit has become hereditary, with the result that his descendants now are blessed in the possession of the most reliable encyclopædia of social and political reference in the world.

* * * * *

When we were children, my grandfather was our standard of greatness and splendour. He was known all through the country as "The Big Master," and the title seemed to us entirely

appropriate. I used sometimes, in my more serious moments, to try and visualize Heaven, and in my conception of the Almighty there was always—as I used to say to myself—" a great look of Grandpapa." He was exactly six feet high, and, for all his many years, he stood as straight as a whip. He always wore—very slightly on one side, as became one who had been a " blood " in his day at Oxford—a low-crowned, black silk hat, with a very wide brim, under which his silver hair curled beautifully. He was clean-shaved, save for small, piebald whiskers, and he wore high, and knife-edged, stand-up collars, and a broad black tie, tied in a very neat bow. The collars grew on his shirts, which had rigid and shining fronts, and he slept in his day-shirt, and put on a clean one every morning. This we knew, and spoke of with bated breath; it was awful, and had something Jove-like about it.

(I am here reminded of a story of a family laundress—not belonging to my family, I hasten to mention—who, in expansive criticism of two of her employers, observed:

" Mr. George is a very dirrty man. He'll wear as many as four shirts in the week! Mr. William's very clane. He wouldn't soil but two in a fortnight! ")

Grandpapa was, in his own way, something of a dandy. He was very particular about his clothes, which were neatness itself, and were always made of dark-grey broadcloth, very solid and well-cut. His straight thin legs—he considered a fat leg to be ungentlemanlike—were sheathed closely in the same iron material; he wore drab spats, and for riding on the roads his trousers were tightly strapped down under

his small, very thick-soled, very well-polished boots. He could always be relied on for a tip if a person were going to Skibbereen to have a tooth out, or to buy Christmas presents, and he had a sympathetic way of producing a small rod of liquorice from his waistcoat pocket when people felt in need of support, and the next meal was still a long way off—or even if it wasn't. How awful and splendid also was the calm with which he would sit at the breakfast table and permit wasps to walk, or sit, at will on his domed bald head!

"If I let the poor fellow alone, he'll do me no harm!" he used to say, while, wild-eyed, and armed with knives, the rest of the family fenced with the invader across the marmalade.

Of the "Reception-rooms," the entrance hall was the only one where, for the children, the character of the reception could be counted upon without much anxiety. On wet days one might play battledore and shuttlecock there without molestation; the dogs were permitted within its precincts, and from the hall-door steps, country-people, beggars, and, upon happy occasions, travelling musicians, could be conversed with, with dignified affability, and beyond the cognizance of the authorities, who had a habit of interference on such occasions that made it difficult to maintain either affability or dignity.

The hall was large, square, and panelled half-way to the ceiling, the woodwork painted a hot yellow brown, grained with a lighter colour, and entitled, without obvious justification, "imitation oak." The Brussels carpet and the red moreen were there, and a mud-coloured wall-paper, with a brown pattern of Gothic arches, filled the space above the panelling. Then, as

now, the hall held three ancient tables of black mahogany; on one of these was an equally ancient desk, and in the desk was kept a thin, small book, solidly, even handsomely bound in brown leather. This, improbable as it may seem, was a very early, possibly the earliest, copy of Bradshaw's Railway Guide. My grandfather was a magistrate, and when, as often happened, the police brought cases to be summarily dealt with by him, he was accustomed to swear the deponents on the Bradshaw, partly from laziness and partly, I think, from a certain impishness of character and a love of playing upon ignorance. (The same spirit that prompted him to set up a Druid-like tall pillar-stone on the crest of a hill in a little wood. "To puzzle Posterity!" he said. And to this day it stands there and is called the Posterity Stone.)

It was under the Bradshaw table that Susannah abode. She was a small, stuffed terrier, whose attitude and general aspect was so natural as to deceive the very elect. I can see her now, quite plainly, with her foxed ears, and rusty-black coat, and little greyish-tan paws, and her glassy eyes with the yellow skin drawn tight round them. She was for many years a source of terror and hatred to visitor-dogs, and was therefore much valued by the children of the house. I think she must, in later years, have been eaten by a foxhound puppy (who would not have sufficient *finesse* to be frightened by her). I know only that there came a time when I returned home from somewhere and Susannah's place under the Bradshaw table was empty.

At one end of the hall, under the gong, and facing the hall door, stood a small table, reputed

to be of the time of William III and Mary, undoubtedly of vast age, and of a calvinistic aloofness of demeanour that showed it had nothing in common with the other tables, with their carnal foxes' brushes and hares' pads, their sacrilegious Bradshaws, their stuffed Susannahs. It was at this table, whose sole burden was a very small, very venerable Manual of Devotion, and my grandfather's Sunday walking-stick, that prayers were daily read. Every morning as the clock struck nine Grandpapa took his stand in front of "the prayer-table," and I beside him, holding his hand, with my father on the other side holding my left hand. It was a place of honour. I despised my brothers who stood with my mother at one side, facing the servants on the other. I have said "Prayers," but it was always the same prayer, and it began, as I then believed, with the enigmatic announcement:

"The Lord abroad is safe to the beginning of this day. Let us therefore give thanks for this and all His Mercies."

Since then I have learned that this was no more than a statement that the Lord had brought us safe to the beginning of the day, which, one would have said, was self-evident, but Grandpapa informed us of it every morning, with his eyes shut, and his thumb in the Manual of Devotion, which he never opened.

As I think of those long-ago peaceful mornings it is strange to remember that the affair of being "brought safe to the beginning of the day" is no longer, as it then was, of the nature of a certainty. During these later days of Ireland, to find that one has been brought safe through the night is a mercy that moves the heart to a gratitude that goes deeper than the lips.

But in those days we took safety for granted, and, having acknowledged its existence, we all turned round and knelt to our chairs; but Grandpapa, one feature of whose greatness it was that he never knelt down, not even in church, stood at the table and faced the gong. Papa and I knelt to an old Free Masonic canopied chair, with the sun, moon, and stars painted on the canopy. After my eldest brother had been endued with knickerbockers, as soon as I knelt at the chair, I used to pray that I too might become a boy. I am now, for many reasons, grateful that the request was denied, and, after all, Providence met me half-way, and offered no hindrance to my becoming a tomboy—a fact of which I was assured to weariness by my rulers and governesses.

I cannot think of that morning Office without visualizing Mrs. Kerr, waddling to her place at the head of the servants' row of chairs, and Travers, taking his at the end. Those who have read *Mount Music* (the first novel written by Martin Ross and me since her death), will there find in Mrs. Dixon and Robert Evans, a presentment, inadequate, but faithful as far as it goes, of Mrs. Kerr and Travers. Travers and his kind are now an extinct breed; in Ireland, at all events, and I do not suppose that any other country could produce their like. Even the Mrs. Kerrs are rare, and are dying out as a race. I find myself writing of old "Tra" with sentimental regret, even with affection, as I think of his forty-two years of fierce and faithful service, yet a more ruthless and implacable tyrant never bullied the children of a house, or ground pantry boys to plate-powder. He had, it is true, softer moments when he would bestow

upon one of my female cousins and me peppermint lozenges of dreadful intensity, on which were inscribed such various mottoes as "*Waste not, want not,*" "*Wine is a mocker,*" "*Give me a kiss.*" Ethel and I disliked them excessively, but were too much gratified to decline them.

With the younger sons of the house, however, he maintained a feud that, as I now believe, gave great zest to his life and theirs.

"Out of my pantry, Master Jack, ye young cub! I'll report ye to yer Grandfather! What call have you here meddlin' with my consarns, ye little ruff'n!"

This to a comparatively blameless child, who, having missed his pocket-knife, was reasonably certain that it had been added to the jackdaw hoards in old "Tra's" pantry.

It is possibly not too much to say that "Tra" would have died for any of us, but lesser proofs of devotion were beneath his dignity. He and Mrs. Kerr came from the North, and were Protestants, Protestantism being in their day the established religion for the higher officials of the servants' hall, but—since religious toleration is still regarded in Ireland more as a difficult virtue than as an inevitable feature of civilization—it shall be put on record that so long as the retainers of all degrees went regularly to their respective churches, it was a matter of indifference to their rulers to which communion they belonged. That difficult virtue, Tolerance, in any respect, or for anything, did not form a part of Travers' character. Not even for himself.

"I had a cold in me shesht yesterday," he has said, "and I put a mustard plaster on me. I wrought in it all night, and in the morning I took the flesh off me in handfuls!"

"TAN-TADDLINS FOR GANDHERS!"

Travers' lifelong comrade, Mrs. Kerr, was more conventional in type. She was fat, rosy, soft-hearted, ready to connive at robbery of her store-closet, even indulgent of brigandage at such times of irresistible opportunity as luncheon and dinner parties. She had her moments of heat, when a child, whose importunities exceeded what she thought was suitable, would be quelled with an incantation of mysterious purport.

"Tan-taddlins for gandhers and crutches for lame ducks! Run away from under me feet before I tie a dish-clout to your tail!"

But the threats were negligible, and the dish-clout never decked the menaced tail.

CHAPTER IV

"C. T."

BEFORE I become more deeply involved in the attempt to travel again over the old tracks, I think it is no more than the subject demands that I should tell something of the place whence they all lead, and to which they have, hitherto, by many and various routes, yet inevitably, returned.

Of the village of Castle Townshend I have already, in *Irish Memories*, offered a description, an inadequate description, as it now appears to me, because by us, who know this village, it is considered a very remarkable one, and it is not fitting that it should be disposed of in the half-dozen lines which were all that I then allotted to it. It is a tidy village; it has overcome the potency of neighbourly example and is even a clean one. And even these two rare qualities do not exhaust its claims to originality. Its single streets falls, unhesitating as Niagara, straight to the sea. Standing at the top of the hill one looks down, almost directly, into the highest branches of two tall sycamores, that are growing in the middle of the street, near the foot of the hill, set in a sort of giant flower-pot, built of rough stones; they are always spoken of as "The Two Trees," and they are the very heart and gossip-centre of the place.

Below lies Castle Haven harbour, and beyond

Photo: Gerald Penrose

"C. T." THE TWO TREES

it, high in the sky it seems to be, is the sea yet again, the broad Bay of Ross, bounded by the delicate low line of the Galley Head. The houses that form the sides of the steep street are reasonably interesting, even picturesque in their diversities of height and form and colour; the people are self-respecting and respectable (which does not always come to the same thing, especially in Ireland, where personal, family, and national conceit can soar to realms unknown to other lands).

But I assert that Castle Townshend is justified of its high opinion of itself. Small and remote as it is, clinging to its hill-side in the wild west of the County of Cork, I can claim for it that its sound has gone forth into most of—if not quite all—the earth, and its words into the ends of the world, carried far and wide in the faithful hearts of many sailor- and soldier-boys; and not only in those of the lads who were born and bred there but also of the many, who, alike in playtime and in the days of the war, have taken their pleasure therein.

"C. T.," the well-beloved, unique in all its attitudes, has ever had social and sumptuary laws of its own. Arrogant in its isolation, it has recognized nothing less than London as a rival lawgiver. Now that all is changing, and its time of greatness seems to have passed, perhaps for ever, I may be excused if I recall a few of the habits and customs of those "High Ginthry" of whom it was once said that they "did be jumping mad for rooms in this village."

It has always been a friendly place. Visiting samples of His Majesty's Navy and stranger yachts have ever been hospitably entreated. Its harbour, safe and comfortable, was one of

the few patronized by a certain wise old schooner yacht, of whom it was somewhat obscurely said that she never went into a harbour unless she had been there before.

"It's a very good harbour to go into, but it's the mischief to get away out of it!" complained a wandering mariner, who, poking his yacht's way in for a night's lodging, with the chart's guarantee for its safety, had, like Odysseus in similar circumstances, found departure a less simple matter than he had expected.

Hotels there are none; the casual tripper finds nowhere rest for the sole of his foot; C. T. has, for generations, been a close borough; (or even a series of burrows, as visiting strangers within its gates have declared, dilating despairingly on their difficulties in sorting dwellers and dwellings. A rabbit warren, with twenty runs in and out of it, practicable only to the elect.)

Large as was weekday liberty in all matters, and specially in those of costume, it was, on Sunday mornings incumbent on all, male and female alike, to array themselves with a care, not to say a splendour, usually reserved for a London function, and to present themselves for morning service at the church. In the afternoon, males, as a concession to their admitted moral weakness, were permitted to sail their boats, even to race them, but lawn-tennis was forbidden by the powers (usually summarized by us as "Mother and the Aunts"), and females were expected to go to what Mother and the Aunts, in moments of conflict, would call "your church."

"Certainly you shall *not* take tea up to Roger's Island"—a lovely place, consecrated to picnics—"you'll march off to your Church!"

And march we did.

COLONEL SOMERVILLE

(A Fancy Study by Sir Joscelyn Coghill)

But, as I have said, these unwritten but none the less rigorous rules are no longer enforced. The great Lawgivers, the Mothers in Israel, are gone, and those who might have upheld their traditions are gone too, most of them, and the golden days of Castle Townshend feel far away.

There was a year, long ago, when, on the very top of the glowing summer tide, a visitor came, one who had heard of "C. T." all his long life, but had never seen it. He was an enthusiast, and he saw everything at its best and most delightful, and it seemed to him that the half had not been told to him.

"Perfect! Perfect!" he said, "I shall never come here again!"

* * * * *

When I was a child, the dozen or so of "quality-houses" in and about the village, were almost exclusively occupied by relations of one or the other sides of my family, aboriginal Somervilles and Townshends, or colonist Bushes and Coghills, who lived an intense life, isolated and self-contained, yet palpitatingly in sympathy with every movement of civilization. My mother's elder brother, Sir Joscelyn Coghill, a man of many gifts and enthusiasms, an Artist, an Actor, a Singer, in all things a pioneer, was one of the first of amateur photographers; he made his own "wet plates," and printed his own negatives, experimenting endlessly, in portraits, in landscapes, in dramatic subjects for illustration (of which a study of my father, as a monk at his devotions, is reproduced here), and he won a prize in the Paris Exhibition of 1863 with a picture of Roger's Island. Spiritualism, and all psychic subjects, were

eagerly experimented in, and found in "C. T." some of their earliest believers and exponents. According to tradition, the seeds of croquet and lawn-tennis were planted, earliest in Ireland, in those lawns whereon my mother's people were wont to congregate. They were furious players of all games. Notably cards; whist, and Quadrille. In this latter game (which is the "Ombre" that so fatally engrossed Belinda in the Rape of the Lock) one of my aunts, after a run of persistent ill-luck, has been known to weep with rage and mortification. I have very often seen my mother, her face dark with despair, rise and "turn her chair," that is to say, carry it round in a circle, with the angry fervour of a dog turning circle-wise in his bed; this to propitiate fortune and change the luck, uttering, while she performed the rite, deep contralto groans. (The stakes, I should perhaps add, being but love and glory.)

"Sylvia!" exclaimed a husband, maddened by his antagonist-wife's success, "I don't know which is the more marked, your duplicity, or your stupidity! You appear to me to be positively *drunk* with spite!"

My grandmother Somerville sat by and surveyed these strenuous enthusiasts with—as on reflection it seems to me—the stately, indulgent cynicism of a generation that did not play outdoor games, and took the loss of its hundreds at cards with a pinch of snuff and an epigram.

To her sunny upstairs sitting-room, the Green Room, the voices of the combatants on the croquet ground must have risen, breaking in on the solitude in which she sat, reading *The Times* or *Good Words*, which, with the Bible, formed the only literature that I can remember in connection

with her. What she thought of the violence in trivial things of the generation to whom she was so soon to yield her place, I shall never know. Interest in a garden she could understand. She had been a skilled and distinguished gardener. Never, as long as she was able to come downstairs, did her bath-chair fail to make the tour of the gardens; or a drive in an open carriage was a suitable way of taking the air. But to spend long summer days in banging balls about. . . .

At croquet I have myself seen an aunt hurl her mallet at my mother at the climax of a fierce altercation. She missed; no woman of their period having any skill in aiming or throwing. None the less, a visitor, who was playing with them, walked rapidly away, and gazed with determination at the view, fearing no doubt to be embroiled in a painful family action at law. That is the way to play games, with heat and heartiness, and no damping down of the fires with stoicism, whether genuine or assumed. . . .

But for Grandmamma, little old *Grande Dame* as she was, whose violence was concentrated in matters of the soul, it must all have seemed inconceivably childish.

CHAPTER V

IN THE BEGINNING

THERE is a book that I have found both entertaining and instructive, whose name is *Memoirs of a Highland Lady.* It describes the disciplining and nurture of the author and her brother and sisters, the children, it should be noted, of a rich and ancient Scottish family. The writer was born in the same year as my Grandfather, 1797, and it is undoubted that the young of that date, were subjected to a treatment, and a domestic discipline, very much more Spartan than that allotted to their descendants; but when I read of the "Highland Lady's" childhood, I feel confident that Ireland has at no time even attempted to rival the remarkably stern and wild methods of Caledonia in dealing with her children, poetic or otherwise. One reads of "wintry ice-baths" in "a large long tub" that stood "in the kitchen-court" of a London house; of nursery breakfasts of dry bread and cold milk, of a paternal whip that enforced the consumption, at bedtime, of the mutton-fat and spinach revolted against at midday—followed by such catastrophes as might reasonably have been expected. I have nothing to offer that can vie with these sensations, but with a missionary hope of bracing, perhaps, some contemporary mamma, I will try and give some idea of how my mother dealt with her seven

MRS. SOMERVILLE, 1895

unworthy contributions to a family of whose elder members it had been asserted by a grateful beggar-woman that they would be "a great addition to Heaven!"

Save on the sacrificial occasions of display, personal or intellectual, already alluded to, one inflexible rule governed our upbringing. "Children should be seldom seen and never heard." I cannot remember that this distressed us. Though inflexible in theory, it was, like most of my mother's decrees, susceptible of modification. Even though her children trembled before her (having habitually bad consciences) they well knew that her most awful thunderings of reproof or prohibition could, more often than not, be eventually ignored. After an adverse decision, final as the Laws on the Tables of Stone, her blue, clear eyes, in which every emotion was candidly mirrored, would waver from one disappointed face to another; unmistakably her experienced offspring would deduce the fact that the right of appeal was not withheld.

* * * * *

There are so many odious maxims with which the hearts of daughters (and of sons also, though with less stringency) are preached down! "Little girls don't climb trees!" (Don't they though! I knew of one so-called "little girl"—a designation that I detested, always employed in connection with senseless prohibitions of governesses—who had her own views about that!) Then at meals—"Those that ask don't get!" And Papa would make it worse by adding, "And those that don't ask don't want!" which was an insult to the intelligence. Or, if one was unable to finish a helping, offered, and accepted

with fallacious self-confidence—"Somebody had eyes larger than her stomach!" Or, when, perhaps, an exciting photograph was on view, "Get out of the light! Your father wasn't a glazier"; (an offensive jest, implying that one was not made of glass) or, worst and most acrid of all, "Don't touch! You haven't got eyes in your fingers!"

There was an old aunt of my father's, who lived near, in a little house squeezed in under the hill, on the very brink of the sea. To her we had to pay sacrificial visits that were always alarming, though interesting. Her husband, Major John Somerville, was dead; he was my grandfather's brother, and she was known as "Mrs. John," or, more formally, "Mrs. Major." She had been in India, soldiering with the Major, and they had brought home a collection—known as "Aunt Fanny's Museum"—of small plaster figures in native costumes, and of vegetable wonders, labelled, with a provocative and mysterious reserve, with such titles as "Pod of a Bean," "Leaf of a Tree," "a Root." Such things, in short, as no normal child could see without wishing to handle. But, if this legitimate craving were yielded to, Aunt Fanny, a tiny and despotic old lady, would snatch the offending child's paw, and, crushing all its fingers into a bunch, would eye them closely, saying in a voice of cold enquiry, "But I see no eyes here?"

Though dating from a later period, I cannot refrain from telling here of the last days of the Museum (which was, indeed, no more than a small cupboard with glass doors). Aunt Fanny bequeathed it to my father, and when she died it was brought to Drishane and was relegated to obscurity and dust on the top of a pantry press.

One wet day, several years later, my brother Jack and I, being short of work, decided to overhaul the Museum. By that time the pods of beans and the leaves of trees had crumpled to atoms, and we threw most of the wonders into the ash-pit. That night my sister, Hildegarde, who had married and gone to a house of her own near at hand, woke to see a small shape bending over her bed, while a tall figure was faintly visible in the background.

"Mrs. John and the Major!" everyone said, remembering the tampering with the Museum.

Nor was that all. Four or five years later, Jack and I again tampered, and this time—since the Museum was wanted as a china cupboard—made a clean sweep of all it contained. It chanced that one of my sister's children was ill that night, and she was in the nursery at about midnight. (I acknowledge the conventionality of midnight, but Aunt Fanny was a very old-fashioned person.) At that dread hour Hildegarde and the nurse heard steps in the passage. The steps paused, and the door was struck as with the palm of a hand. Hildegarde ran to the door and opened it. No one was there. The next morning a visitor, whose bedroom was over the porch, asked who it was that had opened the hall door at about 12 o'clock, and had then walked upstairs and gone down Cockroach Alley. (Such was the pet name bestowed on the nursery passage.)

"The steps seemed to come up the path from The Point," said the visitor.

Now The Point had been the home of Uncle John and Aunt Fanny and the Museum.

* * * * *

The Highland Lady, whose memoirs I regard

as a model in such matters, has given her readers full particulars as to the food, lodging, and clothing of her childhood, and I think I cannot do better than try and follow her lead.

We had a very large, square nursery, round which our railed-in cots were ranged. It was ruled over by Nurse Cotton, old and fat, pious and severe, a Protestant and a disciplinarian. It was our habit to sing while our toilet was being performed, Christy Minstrel ditties of the classic period—

(*"I'll bet my money on the bobtail nag!*
Somebody bet on the bay!")

—being the most popular.

But Nurse Cotton insisted on a preliminary hymn.

Possibly the necessarily spasmodic effort of singing hymns in conjunction with washing one's teeth, conduced to profanity. However that may be, I was, on one inauspicious morning, overheard chanting insults to a younger brother to the tune of "Rousseau's Dream," and was condemned to eat my breakfast standing up; a punishment whose practical difficulties in the consumption of boiled bread and milk imparted to it a certain charm.

Standing, as I do, without the magic circle of experts in Nursery Government, I have heard from afar the noise of battle on the subject of children's upbringing, and, notably, the contention as to suitably nourishing foods—calories, vitamines, proteins, cream, A-graded milk, the exuded "juice" (so-called, hideously)—of bacon, or of beef, and other scientific delicacies. To these discussions I have listened in reverent silence, realizing that the grossly unsound system

on which I had been reared made the fact of my continued existence nothing less than an insult to science.

I have no idea by which of the authorities our nursery *menu* was decreed. I now think that its primary intention must have been to discourage greediness, and the sin denounced as "Peter-particularity." We made no complaints, having early learned that authority moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform, and that certain regulations had to be faced with philosophy, being inflexible.

Without laying myself open to a charge of peterparticularity I feel justified in saying that our nursery breakfast was not a meal to tempt the appetite of a shy feeder, but, fortunately, none of us could be said to come under that heading. It consisted of large bowls of hot, boiled bread and milk, followed by mugs of cold milk, and slices of bread and butter, cut thick, with the butter in isolated oases on its surface. Sometimes Mrs. Kerr, going to Grandmamma's bedroom with her tea-tray, would look into the nursery, and would mercifully tinge the abhorred bowlfuls with a little tea. Failing this alleviation, we have scraped the butter off the bread, sacrificing the future to the present (as all wise people do) and, mixing it into the boiled bread and milk, would pretend that the milk was goats' milk, and then would push it down, on the singular assumption that goats' milk was an improvement upon that of which we had been taught to say

"Thank you pretty cow that gave
Pleasant milk to soak my bread,
Every morning, every night,
Warm and fresh and sweet and white."

An effort for which our gratitude to the pretty cow was purely official.

When we were a little older, we had breakfast in the dining-room. There the conditions were modified. The boiled bread and milk ceased; we had the family hot brown bread, and I had the tops of grandpapa's invariable brace of boiled eggs. But bacon and eggs, fish, even marmalade, as adjuncts to our repast—such as I imagine are the commonplaces of schoolroom breakfasts of to-day—were never so much as thought of by us. Dinner, at 2 o'clock, had nothing special to distinguish it from children's dinners now. The barbarous rule, that food if disliked and rejected should recur at succeeding meals until eaten, only obtained for a short time during the rule of one tyrannical governess. It stereotyped in me a hatred of tapioca that took years to be overcome, and suffered, I may say, a revival, on my hearing the description, given by a cook, of a ghost seen by her son. The cook said:

"Me son was a woodranger, and he was out one morning early-early, in the woods, and he met a ghost. I couldn't say exactly what kind of a ghost he was, but he had fingers on him up to there!" (She indicated her elbow.) "Me son ran home, and he was near dead when he got into the house to me. I told him what he should do was to run lead into a bullet and to shoot the ghost. It wasn't long till he went out another morning early, and the gun with him, and he met the ghost the same way. He shot him then, and the ghost melted away from him into a jelly, like tapioca——" she corrected herself. "No, but 'twas what me son said 'twas like frogs' eggs it was. But sure that same is very like tapioca."

(And this, unfortunately, is indisputable.)

The great truth as to the mystery that masks the ways of Authority was further exemplified in some of the laws that governed our illnesses. By Mrs. Kerr's ordinance, when we had colds in the head, we had mashed potatoes and eggs for our dinners; for colds in the chest, black currant tea was prescribed (called by her "Rob," a term that has puzzled etymologists). For the painful consequences of looking too often upon the strawberry when it is red, or the apple when it is green, a cup of very hot tea made of cloves was administered, followed at dawn, when one was half-asleep and escape impossible, by a beaker of senna-tea, perfidiously topped with cream, and made, if possible, more disgusting with sugar.

But although Mrs. Kerr dealt with our minor ailments it was Mother who was Doctor-in-Chief. She believed herself, not without reason, to have been endowed with peculiar gifts for the practice of medicine, and she rejoiced in exercising them. Calomel, hippo, Gregory's Powders, she resorted to unflinchingly. Sore throats were dealt with externally, with unmitigated mustard, internally, with nitrate of silver, i.e. a piece of caustic, fixed, precariously, in a quill, and thrust down the patient's throat for the scarification of all with which it came in contact. Drastic as were her methods, they were generally successful, and when the doctor and the telegraph-office are both five miles away, the mother of a large family has need of courage and enterprise. My mother certainly possessed these high qualities, and both were exhibited with especial freedom in her practice among the poor people, who very much preferred her treatment, accompanied, as

it always was, by "Kitchen physic," to that of the legitimate artist.

"Ha thin! I'd sooner the Misthress than anny docthor o' thim that's goin' the roads now!" said an old woman, one of her many patients. "But faith, the owld docthor that was in it long-ago-time, was very good. There was one time, an' I havin' a bad stomach, an' I wint to him to the Dispinsary. 'Give her some salts!' says the owld docthor. The young docthor that was with him comminced to weigh out a share o' salts for me. 'Sha!' says the owld docthor to him, 'what baldherdash is this ye have with yer weighings!' says he. 'Here, Biddy,' says he to me, 'Howld yer apron!'"

CHAPTER VI

OF DISCIPLINES

FOR reasons whose soundness I now appreciate, my father and mother discouraged pets. Dogs, of course, there were, but dogs are members of the family. The same applies, albeit in lesser degree, to horses, ponies, and donkeys. Cats, save on strictly business terms, in kitchens and stables, were banned, although an occasional illicit kitten found its way into the nursery. Almost the earliest thing I can remember is awaking, smothering, and flinging myself up, and hearing the cat, that had been sitting on my mouth, flop on to the floor. Possibly that may have been the reason that cats were taboo upstairs. Downstairs restrictions were harder to enforce. Turf (i.e. peat) for burning, was a requirement of the household, and I remember an occasion on which my mother paid an official visit to the turf-house, to estimate demand and supply, and returned indignant, saying that "from behind every sod of turf in the house a kitten was looking out at her!" (So they must have run into hundreds—if one accepts the statement at its face value.)

Those objects, however, on which infancy is usually encouraged to squander its loose affections were denied to us. Guinea-pigs for instance (with their accompanying legend, dear to facetious uncles, that if held up by their tails their

eyes will drop out); ferrets, with their weird, sweet smell, and the fearful possibility of their entering into the bowels of the house by a rat-hole, and never coming forth again (except, perhaps, by night, when they might emerge in one's bedroom and bite a hole in one's throat!); even the usually inevitable rabbit was anathema to the authorities. Failing state-protected pets, my brothers and I fell back on a contraband variety of vermin. Of some of these, monkeys, and goats, among others, Martin Ross and I have treated in *Irish Yesterdays*, but there were many more, as yet unsung. Caterpillars, for instance, hairy, rapacious, adventurous. They were kept in the schoolroon slate-pencil box; that at least, was the intention, but in practice they emulated the habits of the lady who was described as "the most thronging woman ever you seen! She'd go out of the house ten times for once she'd come in!" Thus it was with the caterpillars, Friskarina and Glumdalclitch, and the slate-pencil box. For the most part, however, the caterpillars died untimely. Friskarina's career may be taken as typical. In the course of one of her many excursions she decided to explore Miss Rose (who, it may be mentioned, was our first governess) and therewith shared the fate of many explorers of savage countries, meeting with an end (somewhere about the calf of Miss Rose's leg) that was hastier than usual, even with pets.

I pass over minor interludes of horrific goblin spiders, goblin in more spellings than one, kennelled in match-boxes; of a humming-bird moth, caged, in the belief that it would lay daily eggs, like a hen, and that its progeny could be sold to other entomologists as profitably as

spring-chickens; of a hedgehog, whose unenviable endowment was to harbour fleas in such numbers that one could only assume they clung in clusters to each spine, like shipwrecked sailors to masts. There was also a temporary tortoise, but beyond the fact that she was called—with a less striking originality than was lavished on the caterpillars—Tortoisa, and that prolonged and patient effort failed to induce her to answer to her name, there is but little to tell of her.

We were in the habit of filling her up with water ("between herself and her shell" was the definition of the operation) with the civilizing intention of washing her back (which was believed to be disconnected with her out-works), but Tortoisa, like her classic ancestor, was possessed of a secret turn of speed, and, putting on a spurt one night, she fled from her usual haunts, as well as from the probability of rheumatic fever, and was never seen again. Occasionally an orphaned lamb would be brought from the farm in order that it might receive special attention, and, penned in a corner of the back-scullery, would become the object of passionate though brief devotion. Each in turn received the name of "Pet," and was much courted, even by the kitchen-maid, whose charge it was. These, however, responded to no advances, save the practical one of food; their vogue waned rapidly, and even their usual end. . . .

("Hullo! Roast lamb! Where did this lamb come from?" says Papa.

"That's Pet, sir!" answers Travers, brutally) . . . only induced a temporary laying down of knives and forks.

* * * * *

Education is a vast subject, and, like Nursery Intensive Feeding, far too controversial for an ignoramus of my period to venture to discuss it, but a list of the lesson-books, and a sketch of the plan of campaign that governed my infancy may not be found uninstructive. The system of waiting until seven years had matured such brains as we might possess, did not, certainly, occur to my mother, who was thoroughly alive to the value of story-books as a counter-attraction to naughtiness. How she achieved it, I know not, but, of her pupils, Cameron, my eldest brother, is reputed to have learnt to read before he was three, and my second brother, Boyle, was in the habit of reading the Bible to Grandmamma at something under four years of age, an act not so much of piety as of ostentation. Of my own accomplishments I know nothing, beyond the solitary fact that, at an age that was a matter of months, if I were offered a picture upside-down I immediately reversed it. But this was probably contrariety.

Our first governess was a nice little Welshwoman, with short red hair, and equally short and red temper. To this day the mahogany ruler with which she asserted authority exists, and, since it is two inches wide and half an inch thick, Time's rude hand has dealt with it less rudely than it, in Miss Rose's hand, dealt with mine. I think that many of our lesson-books had descended to us from the childhood of my mother. Mrs. Markham's *History of England* was one of them, and was typical of the then system of serving up each subject of instruction in a sickly sauce of fiction, the assumption being that these were story-books, without any connection with the stern business of learning. It

was a futile fraud, comparable only with Mrs. Kerr's creamed and sugared senna-tea.

The encyclopædic Mrs. Markham, brimming with information; her three odious children, preposterously avid of the same "Little Mary" and her craving for grammar. . . . "Pray, dear Mamma, can you tell me what are the rules that govern the Accusative?" . . . And, thanks to her artificial curiosity, we had to learn those rules by heart. As if such very thin smears of jam could master the underlying powder! *Magnall's Questions*, a work of an earlier time, severe and businesslike, made no such specious attempts to disguise its mission. I found it preferable, even though a frequent punishment was to learn by heart and repeat aloud one of Magnall's *Biographies of famous Englishmen*, (a painful effort, but little mitigated by the fact that I always selected the same one).

To "learn by heart"—a very misleading figure of speech in this connection—was the detested prescription that governed our early education. We had to learn by heart the Church Catechism, Rules of Grammar, pages of a *Child's Guide to General Knowledge* (which was, as I recollect it, a formless category of unrelated facts, mostly useless); Dates of the Kings of England—(Christmas after Christmas these last were written out from memory and bestowed upon my mother, whose histrionic surprise and gratification never failed).

* * * * *

I imagine that my mother, though an inveterate theorist and experimenter, had no very definite theories about education. I think very few people had such, in those days, and least of all

about the education of daughters. My mother had, however, one conviction, which was an unshakable distrust of girls' schools, and for this reason I passed—I cannot say progressed—from governess to governess, from English red-tapist to German incapable, from German incapable to French tyrant, going from system to system with kaleidoscopic incoherency, ending with a single term of lectures at the Alexandra College, Dublin, enjoying my lessons on the whole, and acquiring, officially and otherwise, smatterings of many subjects of very various value. My mother was of that race of professional mothers that seem to have been a special product of the Victorian Age; mothers who took seriously their trade as such, and devoted themselves unflinchingly to their offspring. (I have heard of one who, being asked of which she thought most, her husband, or her son, replied indignantly, "Me son, of course! Why wouldn't I think more of me own son than a strange man!").

Being, therefore, a conspicuous example of the good mothers of her time, my mother read aloud to us those classics—notably Sir Walter Scott and Dickens—that have always been considered to be food for babes. She was an admirable reader, clear and dramatic, a masterful and undetectable "skipper," and, most valuable of qualifications, she shared the interest of her audience. It is often said that the disadvantage of such readings is that when years of discretion are attained a renewal of the acquaintance is shirked. Speaking for myself, I would only say that "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

My mother's conscientious attention to her

business as Parent did not stop at Literature. She devoted much time—I fear I ought to say wasted it—to the attempt to make of me a needlewoman. Twelve stitches of hemming were, nominally, my daily task, but these seldom failed to be multiplied by many times that number, since mother, with fierce cries of "Cats' teeth!" would, with an implacable pin, extract my efforts, and would compel their repetition, until the teeth were blacker than those of any cat, save perhaps, the fangs of some super-venerable Thomas.

It grieves me now to think how little I requited her burning interest in my clothes. I had been away from home, and had been allowed to choose a dress for myself. In reply to the description of it for which she had stipulated, I received a long letter from her, of which the following brief entry in a very early diary is a sufficient summary.

"Heard from Mother solemnly denouncing me and my new dress, and saying 'It is foul, foul, foul!'"

Later in life I discovered a single talent in the department of needlework which I have found useful, even though it can only blossom—or should I say fruit?—when time and place, and loved-one coincide, namely, a Sunday morning at Castle Townshend, and a hat of such age that my friends have forgotten their hatred of it. Then, and only then, emerges "that new hat that is the old," as Tennyson says.

* * * * *

In the great matter of Music, or rather, in playing the piano—which is not always the same thing—our education was begun by Miss Rose. *Hamilton's First Course* heard our first gropings and was

bedewed with many a tear. Our music was, for my mother (who was herself a very accomplished pianist), the most important of our lessons, and during Miss Rose's holidays, though all else was ignored, mother continued our music lessons. A certain picture of Du Maurier's in *Punch*, rises to my memory. Its sub-title describes it: "This is not the Tragic Muse. It is a young Mother imparting to her offspring the Rudiments of Music" (or words to that effect). But Tragedy certainly brooded over those holiday lessons. It is hard to say which was more agonizingly enveloped in her robe, the Teacher, or the Taught. I can now realize what, to a soul of fire, the sight of two humped, stubborn, little backs, fumbling a duet—an "*Arrangement of Bonnie Dundee, for 4 hands*"—the four hands foundering unfailingly at the same bar, must have meant. I believe we all cried. Certainly Cameron and I did, sobbing loudly as we tried to say

"*One*—two—three, *Four*—five—six!"

in response to my mother's hysterical yells of "COUNT! Out—LOUD!"

Later, long after Bonny Dundee had been forgotten, Cameron and I discovered a passion for playing duets—preferably at sight, which combined the thrills of novelty and difficulty—and we spent our pocket money on the classics, arranged for four hands, and our time in thumping them, at full speed, on the old Erard. My mother, rooted and bound in the schools of Rossini and Italian Opera, and Victorian drawing-room "Pieces," detested impartially all our duets, denouncing them to us as "Your Schumacks!" a term of comprehensive hatred and contempt, in which the names of Schumann, Schubert, and Bach were all involved, and were

—as it were—massed for convenience in execration. There came a period, one of many such, when, a dead rat having been interred by its relatives in the Mouseoleum, the drawing-room became uninhabitable. It coincided with the winter holidays and the return of Cameron from school, equipped with several long Litolff books of Symphonies, arranged as duets.

Such an opportunity for unmolested Schumacks was too good to be lost. We wrapped ourselves up in rugs, put hair-pins on our noses, and pounded the great Masters gloriously, as in a pestle, each blind to the other's face, blue, with a central scarlet cherry.

CHAPTER VII

ROCKS AND THE SEA

IN pursuance with the sound but now obsolete doctrine, that children should be seldom seen and never heard, our playtime was quite unmolested by the authorities. After morning lessons we went for a governess-led walk on the roads, but as soon as the afternoon work was over, and above all, in the summer holidays, we did as we pleased.

Boys and girl alike (I say "girl" in the singular as my only sister belonged to a later era), we wore brown holland "wagoners," or over-alls, short, white socks, and bare legs. Our cousins, the Coghills, contemporaneous with ourselves, lived about a quarter of a mile away, and were faithful partners of our joys and sorrows; so faithful, indeed, that, after some now-forgotten outburst of crime, their governess announced that her charges were being led away by bad example, and we were boycotted. I try not to boast of having been rather a naughty little girl, even, or so I have been assured, a leader in naughtiness. Such boasting is a common weakness, and I have never heard of anyone who was proud of having been a good child. In this matter, however, I think there was but little to choose between us and the Coghills, and our mothers presently intervened, and the boycott was broken, or raised, or whatever it is that ends boycotts.

Ours was the great good fortune to live close to the sea. Drishane stands just 200 feet above it, and looks out between Reen Point and Horse Island to the open Atlantic. No one but ourselves knew how the sea and the rocks entered into and glorified the blessed summer holidays. The present mothers, who were the children of my time, know too much, and are able, from their personal experiences, to limit and frustrate, and forbid—in fact, to spoil sport. But our mothers were town-bred, and lived in peaceful ignorance of the possibilities of the cliffs. Not even when Boyle, aged seven, came rolling down forty feet on to a strip of gravel no wider than himself, with dagger-pointed rocks right and left of him, not even then were the cliffs forbidden. Boyle was not hurt. He was put to bed, in compliment to the occasion, and, taking advantage of his position, he demanded of Mrs. Kerr a glass of "rob" (as an alleviation of shock, presumably), and got it, and there the matter ended.

Two other cousins, boys, always spent their summer holidays with the Coghills. The elder, P——, might have suggested to Mark Twain the adventurousness of Tom Sawyer, and did, in fact, suggest many adventures to us, which, unlike those of Tom Sawyer, were carefully withheld from publication. Not even now can they be recounted, since—though the need for secrecy, alas, is past—I have unfortunately forgotten them nearly all. One, however, remains with me, and it is typical of many. P—— and I bound ourselves to climb along the cliffs from the Dutchman's Cove to Bulláwn Cave,* without

* *Irish names, throughout this book, are, as far as may be, spelt phonetically.*

once diverging from the rocks to the land or the sea. This was believed to be impossible; hence its fascination for all right-minded adventurers. I may say at once that the enterprise, though dangerous, was not only a failure, but was not even dignified by disaster. I tell of it only for the pleasure of remembering the blue, gorgeous morning, and the dance of sun on the harbour, and the smell of wet seaweed, and the feel of the hot rocks under our feet, and the young litheness and absolute competence of our young bodies, and the joy of living that is most joyous when, as then, it is most unconscious.

The Dutchman's Cove is a narrow inlet, delved out of the deep cliff by the unwearying sea. It lies parallel with the shore, facing west, and is scarcely fifty yards wide. The cliffs on the landward side (down which Boyle bumped) are some forty to sixty, or more, feet high, and between the cove and the harbour there is a high ridge of rocks, with deep pools among them, full of shrimps, and crabs, and "killigs" (which are tiny fish), and that are, on the side facing the land, endowed with a series of shelves, kindly adapted for the convenience of bathers. The cove lies exactly below Drishane, and its name is due to the fact that a Dutch ship was wrecked there about a hundred years ago. Some of her cargo of mahogany went to make the book-cases in the library, and for many years her figurehead, a huge, staring lady, girt about her forward-plunging body with chains, with coiling hair, like Medusa's serpents, stood in the stable-yard, and was as shocking to visitor horses as was Susannah to visitor dogs.

From the Dutchman's, at dead low tide, P—— and I started, climbing along the rocks

THE DUTCHMAN'S COVE

just above the water's edge, slaty rocks that lie packed close together sideways, like a pack of cards, and are as sharp as knives, save where the seaweed, brown, and orange, and vivid green, has padded them. With an effort we got round the long, sheer snout of Russet Cove, famous for cowries, and for the wonderful sea-anemones, that stud the under surface of an immense rock, which lies like the capstone of a dolmen above and across two others. Poul Ghurrum, the Blue Hole, came next, and its difficulties were circumvented only by reason of the low tide. Very blue and very deep it is, and it is reputed to be a place where what the fishermen call "water-dogs" (in Irish, "*Cu-Mara*," "Hounds of the Sea," in English, Otters) have their secret habitations. After Poul Ghurrum comes the high steep cliff of Fyle Dick, feathered with pale purple-red valerian, spangled with tufts of pink sea-thrift, and white bladder campion, and yellow-green samphire; a fatal cliff over which many cattle have found death, and a strong city for foxes. Its overhanging brow is clothed with a low, scrubby wood of thorns, and of ash and oak dwarfed by the wind, Many and unavailing have been the attempts to "stop" it, when the hounds were meeting at Drishane. There are long, earthquake rifts, bristling with furze and briars, and vast burrows (whether of badgers or rabbits matters not to the foxes), and awful "ways" down the face of the cliff. Many a time have we taken a fox out of Knock Drum, and brought him across the little valley of Ballináfron, and lost him in Fyle Dick, the hounds hurling themselves into the dense covert, and raging there, invisible, deaf to the lamentable calls of the horn. Once I saw two couple make

their way up that cliff, and it was " a sight that'd make yer heart lep across in yer body ! " (as such a moment of agony has been described to me).

But P—— and I were not thinking of foxes, and hounds there were none in those days. We clambered on, under Fyle Dick, until we came to the broad stretch of gravel that is called Castle Haven Strand ; St. Barrahane's Churchyard is behind it, and the old O'Driscoll Castle is on the rock above its southern end, with the sign-manual of Queen Elizabeth's cannon on its walls. After Castle Haven, more rocks, strung out jaggedly into the sea, and then came a deep and conquering cleft, whose prosaic name is Bread and Cheese Cove, and the adventure was defeated. No one, not even a Hound of the Sea, could crawl round the stark, slab-sides of Bread and Cheese Cove. Bulláwn Cave is inviolable, save by boat, and we resigned ourselves to the knowledge.

Many times, in the old " Viking " (a heavy and sensible old four-oared boat, greatly esteemed, and believed by us to be undefeatable as a racing boat), we have gone into Bulláwn, and, leaning over the " Viking's " gunwale, have watched the scroll-like weeds waving in the clear greenness, the shadowy fish slipping through them, swift as thoughts, and holloaed up into the dark vault of the roof to bring the rock-pigeons banging out, like bullets from a machine-gun. Pallid anemones, like bits of blancmange, cling to the sides of the cave, and sea-urchins and star-fish glimmer dim in the depths. One could get out on to the rocks and climb and creep some fifty yards up an ever-narrowing passage, with the chance, awful, yet longed-for, of meeting an otter in it. Papa and Uncle Joscelyn had slain an otter in the cave. " Tailing " it some-

how, and killing it in the boat, in fair fight, with a stretcher. It was an inspiring thought.

How much do we not owe to our mothers for their town-bred ignorance of possibilities, and for their tranquil assumption that we should take care of ourselves, and " do nothing dangerous " ! Had they, for instance, even faintly realized that expedition to " thread," by boat, all the " eyes " in the outlying cliffs, holes drilled by the sea, east and west, in Horse Island, Black Rock, and Reen Point ! In the Eye of Reen there is a rock that can only be floated over without disaster at high water, and then, the spikes that, like stalactites, prong downwards from the cliff-roof above, leave no room for a boat to pass. We essayed it at half-tide, and only were lifted over the rock by the heave of the recurring swell. What shrieks of horror, what adamantine restrictions of command would these entertainments not have evoked ! But we knew enough to hold our tongues.

What our fathers knew we neither knew nor cared. Nor did they. Anyhow, it had been early borne in upon us that fathers didn't matter.

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST CHARGERS

MY riding experiences began fairly early, when, in fact, I was four years old. At that mature age my grandfather resolved to "enter" me to what he considered one of the most important concerns of life; I was wrapped in a rug, and was deposited by him on the back of a young cob no older than myself. Grandpapa then, at my earnest entreaty, left the cob to my sole guidance, a proceeding that moved my mother (not unnaturally, I think) to such shrieks of remonstrance that she frightened the cob into galloping off with me across the croquet ground into the shrubbery. Why the small circular bundle that I must have been remained on the cob's back I shall never know, but what happened was equally improbable, and this was that we galloped into the ropes of the swing. One of these caught the cob round the neck, and in a moment he was rolling on his off-side, and I, in my enveloping rug, was rolling in the ferns and grass beside him.

No damage was done. I had found it all very enjoyable; but Grandmamma insisted on my being given port-wine-negus (which was the panacea of her day for cases of shock), and my brother, Cameron, who had been riding on my father's back, and had also been flung to earth at the moment of crisis, insisted, with precocious cunning,

that he was entitled to a share in the restorative, and we were both put to bed, probably drunk.

It was not till I was five years old that I became the owner of an elderly and thoroughly God-fearing bay pony, called Gift, and he lasted me until I was ten. I rode him in what would now seem a very deformed and deforming little saddle, as deep as a cup, with two, much-twisted, crutches, that stood on the lip of the cup, as a cow's horns stand on her brow, and a "slipper" stirrup. In this I rode daily, and somehow escaped deformity, although my father's adjurations to "keep the left shoulder up" resulted in its being a little higher than the other (a fact that has been eagerly pointed out by tailors in exoneration of all mistakes on their parts).

My habit skirt was long and full, and—much to my disappointment—decorously concealed the little black cloth trousers, with straps (like Grandpapa's!), that were worn beneath it. Like him, also, I always rode in a silk tall hat, made specially to his order to fit my small poll, and he wrote to London for a grey silk tall hat, in which I rode in summer; it was a sort of pinkish mauve, and had a rather low crown and a very curly brim, like his own hats.

I have told in *Irish Memories* of my infant experiences in the hunting-field. They were, unfortunately, of but brief duration. The old West Carbery Hounds fell on evil times, and I was still a small girl when they ceased to exist as a pack, and the old Huntsman, Dan Leahy, having no longer meal or meat in the kennels' larder, opened the door of the kennel-yard—or so I have been told—and let what was left of the pack loose upon the streets of Skibbereen to forage for themselves; a story hard

to believe, but, for that reason, probably true (as is not infrequently the case with Irish stories).

I cannot remember that this *débâcle* distressed me in any way. The glorious position of being sole owner of Gift was happiness enough. To ride with Papa or Grandpapa, and to be allowed to jump an occasional "stone gap," of not less than eighteen inches high, sufficed. I used to go out riding every day, yet of all those many days I can now remember but two salient incidents, one pleasant, the other the reverse. I was riding with my father, and suddenly, in a narrow road, we were confronted with a truculent bull. We charged him, shouting, and he fled from us. This, I need hardly say, was the pleasant incident.

The other was, very gravely, the reverse. My Grandfather and I, my age being perhaps seven, had gone forth together, and we met a cousin of his, an elderly gentleman, who was also riding. He turned and came with us, and his horse and Grandpapa's were very fast walkers, and Grandpapa and he (like all grown-up people, I thought) never wanted to go out of a walk. But Gift was a bad walker and a rough jogger, and he jogged . . . and jogged. . . . I said nothing. A tear or two may have run down my cheeks, but I kept silence, being very proud then. I am sure I should cry now; but that was the first and last time I endured the torture of being badly rubbed.

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I only remember two or three falls. I was kicked off, cantering in a field (and was congratulated by Papa on becoming a "field-

officer," a very old joke, and, as I thought, a poor one), and I was dragged once, for a short distance, on the road, after which I was given a safety-stirrup (and never had occasion to prove it); but my first noteworthy tumble was when I was about eleven. I had asked to be allowed to gallop a young mare round a field; the mare, whose name was Tidy, had been led about by my father, with one of my mother's cousins, a nervous lady of very ample proportions, on her back. I was put up on an enormous old-fashioned, two-crutch saddle (such a construction as I have heard defined as "The Divil's own howdah of an old side-saddle!") and, in about one minute, Tidy, who was very cold and much bored, had bucked me out of it on to the top of my head. I had slight concussion with the pleasurable result that I was allowed to do no lessons except music for the rest of the winter. It was unfortunate, however, that my mother had witnessed the disaster, as it intensified her already vigorous distrust of horses, and more especially of mares, a distrust in which she was ardently encouraged by her sister-in-law. My father had bought at a Bantry horse-fair a small chestnut mare, whose native mildness had been intensified by a life of what had obviously been semi-starvation. He exhibited her to my mother and my Aunt Katie. The little creature stood with a drooping head to be inspected. The ladies eyed her with dislike and suspicion, and then Aunt Katie said darkly:

"She may *seem* very gentle, Henry, *but she has a mare-y eye!*"

It was this same aunt of whom Peter Donovan said:

"Ah, Lady Coghill's a very frightful lady!"

(which was less rude than it sounds, being merely a reflection upon her want of nerve).

Peter was a horse-breaker, and, in order to show that the colt he was training could, as he put it, " be said by his loodheen," i.e. be controlled by his little finger, he had galloped him directly at my aunt and some of her progeny, only swerving at the last moment from the path leading to destruction. He was both surprised and mortified that the feat was far from being appreciated by the lady in whose honour it was performed, but he said, forgivingly, to my father :

" Sure, the mother o' childhren has no courage ! "

When I first knew Peter I was about thirteen, and he must have been well over sixty ; he was a little fellow, of hardly five feet in height, without " as much meat on him as'd bait a rat-trap " ; a beautiful rider, and with a gift for " gentle-ing " a young horse, rather than " breaking " him, that is rare in his class. In those days his opinions ranked for me above the Law and the Prophets. As a special treat I was now and then allowed to go out " schooling " with him, and I can truly say I have never been so gratified as when, in the course of a talk about horsemanship, he told me :

" 'Twas the Grandfather gave you the sate, but 'twas the Lord Almighty that gave you the Hands ! " (a beautiful compliment that we passed on to " Christian " in *Mount Music*).

I suppose I responded in kind, as well as I could, because I remember that Peter said :

"Ah, what good am I now ? It brings the tears to my eyes and the grief to my heart that I cannot do now with a horse what I done in my bloom ! "

Peter, in his bloom, must have broken hearts as well as horses. As I recollect him, he was like a little elderly Dresden china shepherd, with long silver ringlets over his ears and bright blue eyes, and checks as pink as a baby's. He was thrown and killed while showing-off a young

"SURE, THE MOTHER 'O CHILDHREN HAS NO COURAGE!".

horse at a fair, and it was said, in apology for his overthrow, that he had "drink taken." He must have been over seventy, and, after all, it was a good way of escape from old age and its limitations, and of getting back—as we may believe—to the days of his "bloom."

* * * * *

As I grew up, I was given, nominally for myself, young horses, that had been bred at home, and had usually been trained by old Peter, Lucifer, Psyche, Cigarette, and others, more transitory, whose names even I now forget. For such gifts, unlike my first old Gift, did not long remain in my possession. There came always the fatal moment when someone made a seductive offer and money was wanted—and when was it not wanted? with successive governments, obeying the command to love their enemies, and proving the sincerity of their attachment by robbing their friends on the enemies' behalf—and the gift, with a guarantee that it carried a lady, went from under that sorrowing lady, away into darkness, if not oblivion.

The first horse that was absolutely mine, bought with money earned by myself, was a pretty, little well-bred mare, called Dodo, she and Mr. Benson's novel coming into action at the same time. I bought her, half-trained, from a farmer, and she had the name—before she received that of Dodo—of being "a very airy mare, and as loose as a hare." In view of these qualities it seemed well to give her a spell of discipline with long reins before saddling her. It happened, on the day following on that of her arrival, that Martin Ross and I were driving homeward in a high dog-cart, and with a decidedly "airy" horse in the shafts, a hunter, whose foible it was to jump the nearest fence, dog-cart or no, if anything agitated him. We were at the foot of a long hill when we saw from afar some creature coming down the hill to us at that rate of speed that is picturesquely, if obscurely, described as "hell for leather." Soon we realized that it was a riderless, runaway

horse; I pulled Sorcerer as close under the fence as he would go, and we awaited events with some not unpleasant excitement. Like a flash the horse went by us, in a whirl of lashing ropes and reins, and Martin and I, looking at each other, aghast, said but the one word:

"Dodo!"

She was out of sight in a few seconds, flying back to her birthplace, four miles away, by the hard high road.

"She shot into the yard to me like a thrain!" said her late owner, "she'd a great gallop in her always!"

I got her home at once, and she stood all night in bran poultices, and was none the worse. Airy though she undoubtedly was, she became reasonably steady with hounds, and was chiefly given to misbehaviour on the road, where, on small provocation, such as a humming in telegraph wires, or a donkey grazing on what is called "the long meadow" (i.e. the grass of the roadside), she would, as someone said, "go into the sky and stop there for five minutes."

It once happened that on a market day, in a street in Skibbereen, a large pig ran across the road so directly in front of her that she came on her knees on its back. Before I had time to think, Dodo had hopped like a kangaroo, on her hindlegs, clean over the pig, and no one was any the worse. The owner of the pig said it was by the Mercy of God that the pig was there, the way the mare's knees didn't meet the road. But he agreed that the mercy might have been still greater had the pig been elsewhere.

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Resisting the temptation of being led by the

thought of Dodo to enter at once upon the supreme subject of Hunting, I turn to earlier affairs of the stables, and to the carriage horses that I first remember, Daniel and Dhulamon. Daniel was a flea-bitten grey, who might have been the model for the Elgin marble horses. A big little horse of 15.2, hard and enduring as his marble prototypes, with a tremendous crest, and a haughty little head, and a blue muzzle that would fit into a teacup. His brother and comrade at the pole—which sounds as if they were Arctic explorers, but merely refers to their lot in life—was a bright bay with black points, as handsome in his own way as Daniel, but less classic in looks. Dhulamon is the Irish name for a certain seaweed, whose colour also may be described as bay with black points, and Dhulamon was so-called because he spent his youth on Horse Island, which is a small island, of less than thirty acres, at the mouth of Castle Haven Harbour, that is supposed to possess peculiar merits as a place of healing for horses. Dhulamon, as a colt, nearly died of strangles, and as soon as he convalesced, my grandfather, who favoured heroic remedies, made him swim to the island, and left him there, either to be killed by falling over the cliffs, or cured by the island's peculiar merits. Dhulamon chose the latter alternative, and with perfect success, since he and Daniel had reached the ages of twenty-nine and thirty, before they retired from business. Two more blameless and admirable beings, whether equipped with four legs or with two, have never, I believe, drawn the breath of life; they won the confidence even of my mother, and I cherish a few happy memories of entertainments, dances and the like, at which Tommy B——, the coachman, having enjoyed

himself overmuch, my mother had to submit to my driving the carriage home, with Tommy's head pillowed on my shoulder, while the two little horses rattled along at a pace that they and I found better fun than she did.

No day was ever known to be too long for Daniel and Dhulamon, even though in the remote time when they first wore winkers, Bandon, some thirty-five miles of rough road from Drishane, was the nearest railway station, and the double journey there and back, was held to be no more than a fair day's work. By the time however, that my brothers' school-going began, the railroad had advanced to within twenty-one miles of us, a distance that represented no more to that staunch little pair than one of Daniel's own flea-bites. But for the victims of education the long drive was but the preliminary of a horrible journey. Grandpapa, administering generous tips, would try and give further consolation by recalling the days when he was an undergraduate, going to Oxford, and would, as often as not, have to spend a week or more in Cork, waiting for a favourable wind. But thinking on the frosty Caucasus never yet warmed anyone, and the boys believed their sufferings to be unrivalled. They were undoubtedly considerable. Think of getting up at 3 a.m. on a black January morning, with the prospect of driving twenty-one miles, and this in order to go back to school! For my part I rather enjoyed these settings-forth. I used to get up and drink a stirrup-cup of tea with the gloomy travellers in front of the huge kitchen fire—since these obsequies were always celebrated in the kitchen, for warmth I suppose, and unconventional comfort—and then I could go back to bed, and think with luxurious

pity of the boys, trundling away in cold and darkness! This effort enabled them to catch a train at Dunmanway, that decanted them, at Cork, into the Bristol steamer, with a future of twenty-five to thirty hours of sea before them, and a further decanting imminent; though, this time, in the active and not the passive sense. Why do I cast the inevitable and brutal gibe at sea-sickness? Let me, in apology, quote what was said by Martin Ross of this affliction.

"For me sea-sickness has but two aspects—the pathetic and the revolting. The former being the point of view from which I regard my own sufferings, and the latter having reference to those of others."

CHAPTER IX

ANCIENT HISTORY

IT may seem strange to those Gentlemen, and Ladies of England that live at home at ease, to consider that in the course of some fifty years, we in Ireland have experienced two Rebellions, and are, even as I write, involved in a third (which it is not too much to hope may be the last). And perhaps the strangest feature of the situation, or rather the succession of situations, is the fact that even still, for those, or most of those, who, finding themselves between the devil and the deep sea, chose the latter and crossed St. George's Channel, still, for those exiles, Ireland is the only country worth living in, and their hearts, turning to the old times, know that there, in spite of all, they were happiest.

> *" What should they know of England*
> *Who only England know ? "*

This is a saying that has so approved itself as to have already been received into the Valhalla of " Selected Quotation " books. But if we substitute the word Ireland for England, we feel shaken. The more that is known of the psychology of other countries the less it is possible to estimate the importance or the significance of the things that happen in this land of Paradox, this Emerald Isle, whose special attribute of greenness is withheld from her sons, while it is liberally bestowed on

the visiting stranger within her gates. Therefore, carefully refraining from dogmatism, I will say no more than that it is hard for English people to realize the conditions of Irish life, and still harder for me to write of it without over-emphasizing either its charms or its disadvantages. I can at least record dispassionately the first of the Rebellions through which it has been my lot to have lived, the Fenian Rising, since at seven years old, or thereabouts, one has, as a rule, no *parti pris*.

One of my friends accuses me, not without reason, of a gross ignorance of history, but it cannot be denied that we, of my generation, have acquired some practical knowledge of it and have lived through some stirring chapters.

"Can you tell me, my dear child," said Mrs. Markham (or she will probably say it in a future edition), "any particulars of The Irish Rebellion of 1865–70?"

"Not many, Mamma," answered Mary. "Since the Rebels always rose at night, and I, as you know, retire at seven o'clock."

This was also my case, but, before retiring, I was in the habit of secreting for my personal use a Russian sabre, brought by my father from the Crimea, and, having retired, I was accustomed to think myself to sleep with the invention of exploits in which the sabre and I should wade deep in blood and glory. Special Constables, my father, I believe, among them, nightly patrolled the village of Castle Townshend and the surrounding roads, and the ancient cannon at the Coast-Guard station, relic of the Napoleonic wars, instead of banging innocently across the harbour at its habitual target on the opposite cliff, was turned threateningly inland, to face

a possible mark of flesh and blood. In Drishane unusual defensive precautions were undertaken; bars were put upon some of the downstairs window-shutters, and the hall door was more or less consistently locked o' nights—(judging from later experience of my family I should say that this observance was far from being invariable). Troops were quartered in the workhouse in Skibbereen, and on one wonderful day a detachment of Dragoons came jingling and clattering down the hill to the big field, Shanacluan, just outside our front gates, and there manœuvred, to the ecstasy of all beholders, not even excepting the groups of villagers whom the Dragoons charged at full gallop, and only swung away from at the last moment, when all believed their end had come. Some of the soldiers came up to the house for lunch, and my brother was lifted on to a sergeant's horse and rode up the avenue in front of the sergeant.

I was ignored, being only a little girl!

My soul burned within me. I, that had a pony of my own, as well as a secret sabre that I was prepared to use as daringly as any dragoon of them all!

I think that from that hour I became a Suffragist.

* * * * *

I was speaking the other day to an old friend, a farmer's widow, who was a young woman in the days of the Fenians.

"Ah," she said, "they were Gentlemen to these men!"

("They" were the Fenians, "these men" our latest revolutionaries of 1916-23.)

"Sure I knew them well, they used to be drilling

every night in our fields. Your great-uncle, the Doctor, would be driving the roads, but sure he'd never let on he seen them! 'The poor D's,' he'd say, 'Isn't it bad enough for them to be out of bed all night!' Ah, the Fenians were gentlemen! and they knew a gentleman too when they met him! Didn't O'Donovan Rossa himself show the Doctor two pistols and a sword he had, and they rolled up in a pair o' new blankets in his bedroom! He knew well the Doctor would never let on!"

O'Donovan Rossa was one of the leaders of the Fenian movement in South Cork, and his efforts in the unequal conflict have made for him a name that, as is the reward of all Irish Rebels, of whatever class and calibre, will ever be remembered in his native country. In his time "class-consciousness," that agreeable quality, that seems to spell either jealousy or contempt, according to the angle from which it is regarded, had not been developed, and there was no personal ill-feeling between the farmer rebels and the landlord constitutionalists. O'Donovan Rossa himself had known that help and friendship might be sought and found among those whom Ireland was only then beginning to rate as enemies. It is on record that, before his sudden rise to notoriety, he had composed a poem of congratulation on my father's safe return from the Crimea, which, if doubtful in rhyme, and peculiar in rhythm, was unimpeachable in sentiment.

The Fenian rising subsided, having achieved nothing. England, in her dealing with her subject countries, demands horrors to endorse sincerity, and the old Fenians "fought like gentlemen," as my old friend said, and their sacrifices and

efforts were in vain. Perhaps it was their failure that moved us, but I and my fellows of that era turned rebels, and read the poems of Davis and Mangan in *The Spirit of the Nation*, and howled the "Shan Van Voght" and "The Wearin' of the Green" in the teeth of English-bred cousins; and we all assumed Irish titles and fought inveterately for precedence in quite the orthodox Irish way.

Next in the historical events that I can remember making any impression upon us, came the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and it then became fashionable among us to repeat the following rune:

"I'd be my First if I had my Second to throw at my Whole!"

(I leave the solution to be discovered by the ingenious.)

For the children of the house it was all vague excitement and definite fun, but to my grandfather, and to my father and mother, and my uncles and aunts, strong Churchmen and women all, Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church Act was an almost incredible sacrilege, a felon stab that hit them harder, even than the measures that, thenceforward following, ended by stripping them not only of their property, but also of the political and civic influence that their consciences could assure them they had exercised only for good.

These large and serious matters are outside the scope of these divagations. I have already, in *Irish Memories*, spoken of the dark years of the early 'eighties, and, as I have said, I cannot pretend they affected us very profoundly. A combination of youth and the Irish temperament does not make for pessimism or political prescience; in any case there were not many

prophets who, in the 'eighties, foretold the developments of forty years later. One prophecy, indeed, I have found recorded, that was made by an old farmer in 1894, and I will let him have the

"THEY'LL BE ATEING EACH OTHER LIKE TIGERS!"

last word on the subject of Irish Politics—a subject in which the last word is invariably the beginning of an argument.

My old farmer said, composedly, "Well, they'll get Home Rule in the latter end, and when once they get it they'll be ateing each other like tigers!"

CHAPTER X

JUSTICES AND JUSTICE

"LET us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us."

Thus the book of Ecclesiasticus enjoins. I have no famous ancestors to praise, but I may, at least, dispassionately present my father and grandfather, and their forbears, as men who faithfully did their duty in their day, and are for that reason, if for no other, worthy of praise and to be had in honour. Loyalists without rancour, Protestants without heat or contentiousness, magistrates without bias, and good neighbours. Such men and women they were as an old countrywoman was thinking of when she said, not long since, to my sister:

"'Tis from the best of Quality you get the right frin'ship an' the right nicety——" and went on to lament the persecutions and destructions that these later years have brought to the class to which the poor people have been used to look for help, and have not often looked in vain.

* * * * *

It is an assertion, trite to boredom, that the last hundred years have seen more changes than all that preceding centuries have to offer. Apart from Aeronautics and "Broad-cast Wireless," as substitutes for post-chaises and the bell-man, I can think of no more radical change than that

which has befallen the position of Irish gentry. To discuss its causes and general bearing is not at all my intention. It is a subject as full of fighting as was Donnybrook Fair. The fact remains that the Irish social structure has been smashed, and it is still to be seen if what eventually replaces it is an improvement. If the dice in Ireland are properly shaken, there are, no doubt, plenty of sixes to be thrown, but in Irish politics it must be said that, as a rule, it is the deuce that turns up.

Setting, however, these controversies on one side, it seems to me that there are features of the life of Irish landlords of the past that are deserving of remembrance, and since I know most about them, I will speak of the men of my own family.

My great-grandfather died, as a comparatively young man, of a fever that attacked him when he was serving on the Grand Jury in Cork; the fell "jail-fever" that was so often the wretched prisoners' way of escape from the fierce sentences of the time, and was also—as in my great-grandfather's case—their unintended retaliation on the men who judged them. My grandfather was a boy when this happened, and, according to the custom of the time, was spoken of among the country people as "Heir Somerville." Ireland is the land of long memories. The young heir came of age in the year 1818, well over a hundred years ago, and it is now forty years since he died, yet still there are old people who will say that they "remember of Heir Somerville," and speak of some act of his, and always with the mention of his name there comes a word of praise.

It was of him and my father and their

predecessors, that it was said, "Them that they takes in their hand has the Luck of God!"—Once when my horse had cast a shoe, I had it replaced at a forge several miles from home. I did not know the old smith, but he knew me (or, more probably, the horse I was riding) and when I offered to pay him, he put his hands behind his back and said:

"Aren't you Colonel Somerfield's daughter? If I had a silver shoe I'd be glad to put it on that man's horse!"

It will not be out of place if I here recall my mother's characteristic reception of an appreciation of my father that was offered to her, as a compliment, by an Englishwoman, in whose high opinion of her own social judgment my mother did not share. Praise was lavished upon "the dear Colonel," and the eulogy ended with the declaration that he was indeed "one of Nature's gentlemen!"

"He's nothing of the sort!" replied my mother with considerable warmth, "he's a gentleman because his father, and his grandfather, and all his ancestors were gentlemen! Nature had nothing on earth to say to it!"

The eulogist, whose husband, it must be admitted, owed nothing of distinction to his ancestors (whose existence might have been presumed but was incapable of proof) and very little to Nature, received this round shot between, as it were, wind and water, and sank, without so much as one bubbling cry.

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When I think of the Wednesdays and Saturdays of my childhood, I see Papa and Grandpapa mounting their horses, Lalla Rukh, the grey Arab

mare, and Fox, the tall chestnut, in the stable-yard (in which forbidden paradise I generally happened to be, in or about, what time horses were going out), and proceeding sedately down the avenue, between the elm trees and the hydrangea bushes, to do their duty in Skibbereen as Magistrates or as Poor-law Guardians. I now believe that they deeply enjoyed these bi-weekly pilgrimages. They grumbled at them, faithfully and unfailingly, but, like "the men who fought at Minden," they "would *not* be denied for to clean the cook-'ouse stairs," and I cannot think that their assiduous devotion to these duties was all sheer conscientiousness.

Usually, on the day preceding "The Bench," intending litigants would be seen straying about the avenue, waiting to see "The Big Master," regardless of his known refusal to give any opinion or decision, still less any promise, before the case was tried; inexorably convinced of the truth of the saying that "a word outside is better than a pound in Court." The Master was the repository of many secrets, the trusted adviser in all difficulties. He could speak some Irish, and understand more, and many must be the priceless stories and sayings that have gone out of the world with him. He was not of the period to appreciate them.

"Oh, by my Honour," he would say of some magnificent exposition of rights, or, more often, wrongs, "The fellow told as many lies as would bog a noddy!"

But familiarity had dulled his appreciation of the tropes that might perform this singular feat.

Martin Ross and I have but seldom accomplished a visit to a Court of Petty Sessions, such

being habitually discouraged by our male relations (to whom the idea of female J.P.'s would have been an unthinkable horror). Yet, when we have done so, we have never failed to come away laden with jewels, a good deal more than five words long. But possibly we had what local idiom would call " a great smack " for such, and we may also have had special luck.

Happily that famous and excellent newspaper, *The Skibbereen Eagle*, has at times possessed reporters who, as the hymn enjoins, in their daily course set their minds to hallow all they found, and reported verbatim all that came their way. I have preserved some of these records. To read them is like looking through a window into the lives of the litigants ; almost—so diverse is the point of view, the sense of humour, the standard of honour or propriety, the laws of social etiquette—like intercepting fragments of intimate wireless messages that are passing between two far-off planets. Those that are here transcribed are now of comparatively ancient date : I have in all cases, changed the names of places, and also those of the antagonists (although in a country where there may be a hundred Dan Donovans, or Mike Collinses, or Jerry Sullivans, this is scarcely a necessary precaution, and, even though I gave the original names, the identity is as strictly preserved as if I wrote each man down as John Smith).

It is, however, from a magistrate of the past era that I have learned of the tailor, whose life history was briefly, yet sufficingly given by a Head Constable of the R.I.C.

" Your Worships, the prisoner is a conthráry little man who is never duly sober. He was found partaking in a fistic encounter in a public

lane in the town. He had the complainant on the ground, and he was thrafficking in his face, and, I may say, he wrought sad havoc in it."

Thus the Head Constable, in the majestic language becoming to his office. And the best that the little tailor could say for himself was that he had had " no more than four glasses of whisky, and two at-timpts."

But what, precisely, an " attempt " may represent I am unable to explain. Neither can I, or, I believe, anyone else, explain or even guess at the motives that underlie many of the quarrels that culminate in a " cross-summons," and a full-dress case at Petty Sessions. Battles such as these are often founded on clan hatreds, ages old, that seem to grow in virulence with each successive generation ; or their germ may be no more than a word out of season that grows and multiplies until the insult has achieved clan rank, and is registered as one of the many sins for which there is no forgiveness.

Nearly all my records deal with fights, single or collective, and it is indisputable that a special vivacity enlivens those conflicts in which the ladies of the warring families bear a hand (in more senses than one). Yet the male witnesses are sufficiently graphic in narration. A plaintiff having asserted that the defendant " left a stroke of a poker on him," continues his indictment : " Sullivan had no reason to assault me only for me warning a goat to him that was trespassing on my land. McCarthy was inside in my house at the same time, and he seen him, and he said that surely Sullivan was very stiff in another man's house——" (a lenient reference, perhaps, to the stroke of the poker). " Sure he told me he'd be my doctor, and he'd grind my bones to powder ! "

(A recognized habit in doctors of the stiffer kind.) The complainant then went on to say that later he met the defendant at a funeral, and he was jumping out of his body with the passion that was on him. He, the complainant, did not say that he was ready to fight any man, but the defendant said, "Now is your time! I'm a better man than you! and with that," continued the complainant, "he took his horse that was in his cart, and he backed him with venom, trying could he drive the shaft through my mare's body! I declare to God and to your Honours, I'm afraid of him every day of the week!"

This was a simpler affair than that of the Tobins and the Moriarties.

Dan Tobin swore that Mrs. Moriarty beat his mother with stones. Her two daughters also beat his mother. They were all fast in his mother. If he was to have the longest day in June he couldn't tell the Bench all those women said to his mother. They were rolling their two fists in his mother's hair.

Mrs. Moriarty then swore that she had been sick for some time and was anointed by the priest for death, and she was sick enough still. On the day in question she saw Mrs. Tobin stoning her ducks; she injured a gander so that he was half an hour in a wakeness. The witness was seventy years old and she never heard the like of the language. It was like a fish market. Miss Moriarty, corroborating her mother, swore that there were three lame ducks and a lame hen after Mrs. Tobin. ("After her," it should be understood, in a figurative sense, left on the battle-field, victims of her ferocity.)

"But what," enquired the Bench, "was all the row about? What began it?"

"The Tobins were made up for it," replied Miss Moriarty, darkly, and the Bench realizing that this was but an episode in an immemorial feud, bound all the parties "to the Peace."

Possibly the most acrid of all the sources of dispute are those that have their origin in Rights of Way, and have progressed into a complex that would baffle the League of Nations. Such, for example, as the feud between the Howrihans and the Hallahans. In cross-examination Mrs. Howrihan swore that she saw Mrs. Hallahan going "across the Passage" (i.e. the disputed right of way) and she told her, decently and quietly, to go back. But Mrs. Hallahan replied that she would not go back, and that she would follow on the way she was going and no thanks to Mrs. Howrihan. She then struck the witness two strokes of a fist on the head, and her brother's wife, Mrs. Dunnigan, that was with her, struck her three strokes of a fist on the poll. With that Mrs. Hallahan came on after Mrs. Howrihan, and she picked up a stone, and Mrs. Howrihan ran away home for fear would she be killed. Following on Mrs. Howrihan, Mrs. Hallahan was called, and, in cross-examination, swore that she did not say that she would keep Mrs. Howrihan between the gate and the pillar until she would squeeze the decay out of her. It was a lie to say that she'd say the like of it. Nor did she spit in Mrs. Howrihan's face.

"I had no back-talk," she added, "but she had plenty, and she called me an evil spirit, and said that I had spirited away the milk from her cows."

The respective husbands and a son then entered the arena. James Hallahan swore that Michael Howrihan abused his wife, and was screeching and roaring the way that he would be heard a

quarter of a mile off, or maybe more. He did not see his son Richard having a stone in his hand to throw at Howrihan.

Richard Howrihan then swore that on Tuesday week the Hallahans came out before him in the passage, and Richard Hallahan came out of the house like a young horse coming out of a stable, and stuck his hand into his eye, and swore he

"I HAD NO BACK-TALK."

should pay for singing the song, and it no more than an old song and nothing at all to say to the Hallahans. Being cross-examined he admitted that he might have used James Hallahan's name in the song. It was, he said, a song he often heard before, and you could change it to anyone's name. If the Bench wanted it they could have it. This was all that was in it :

"Boys, where will we go to-night ?
We'll go to Jamesy Hallahan's,
'Tis there we'll get a wife."

Heard dispassionately, and without its context, this does not seem to be one of those ballads which if a man made he need not care who should make his nation's laws, but it appears to have possessed a mysterious power of stimulation for the Houses of Hallahan and Howrihan, and, in the conclusion of the whole tangled matter, the Bench again played for safety, and bound both family parties to "The Peace."

CHAPTER XI

JACK DRISCOLL AND OTHERS

IN my Grandfather's time the Chief of the workmen on the home-farm was old Jack Driscoll, a little man typical of a class that is now passing, if it has not already passed. *Plus royaliste que le Roi*, unshakable believer in the supremacy of breeding, despiser of his fellows; compact of cunning, and wisdom, and fidelity; incapable of cheating or defrauding his master, incapable of not overreaching—or of trying to overreach—all others, and happily endowed with that confident and complacent belief in himself that is so often one of the privileges of the half-educated.

("I hope he'll be as good a servant as me, Miss!" said a dismissed groom of his successor. And again, writing from a subsequent situation, "Me and my horses is admired by all!")

Jack Driscoll was one of the last of the natural wearers of the Stage Irishman kit; knee breeches, blue or grey frieze tail-coat with brass buttons, grey knitted stockings, and high felt hat; the tail-coat was reserved for high days and holy days, fairs and funerals, and his everyday wear was a loose white homespun flannel coat (called a "*bauneen*" or "*little white*") but always the breeches, half-unbuttoned at the knees, and the high hat.

Tiny old Jack, and the tall Master were in the

habit of holding age-long colloquies on the gravel-sweep in front of the hall door, during which they moved in unconsciously rhythmic circles, Jack's relation to the Master being that of the minute hand to the hour hand of a clock; the Master listening gravely to the Prime Minister's enormous recitals, while turning slowly and majestically in consonance with the incessant movement that was a feature of the Prime Minister's oratory.

Jack's gifts were not merely agricultural and diplomatic; he was a noted sportsman, who had, as a rule, a couple of good greyhounds, and could with certainty lay his hand on a hare, or a fox, or a covey of "burrds," the term of honour which he reserved for that now extinct fowl—as to south-west Cork—the partridge.

It was he who gave me my first dog, a large and hideous white puppy, with yellow eyes and a long tail. His mother was one of the greyhounds, his father of race unknown, but described as a good dog indeed, and a very nosy dog for a fox. I called him by the family name of Cozy, and, as Shelley says, "Without wherefore I worshipped him so."

I cannot now remember the length of his reign, only that it was brief, and I have never known why he was thus untimely banished. Possibly (being inclined to crossness) he bit the postman (and postmen seem to excite bad feeling in the best-regulated dogs), or it may have been his appearance that was his undoing. He went. My grief, at first overwhelming, found expression (and the appeasement known to artists) in a poem to his memory. It was written in French, as a mark, I imagine, of special distinction. I can remember but one verse in which grief, resignation, and philosophy, are blent with a fervour that

rises superior to the limitations of idiom. One verse will suffice :

> " *Autrefois j'ai eu un chien,*
> *Mais à présent je n'ai rien.*
> *Il était beau, mais il a été chassé*
> *Hélas ! mon pauvre cœur est cassé*
> *Telle est la vie !* "

* * * * *

My grandfather was a firm upholder of religion, whether his own or that of others, yet he was undoubtedly proud of the fact that Jack was something of a freethinker (even as the parents of a bad little boy will boast of his naughtiness). He was fond of telling how he had suggested, for I know not what relieving of Jack's soul, a visit to the Priest.

" And the fellow said to me," says Grandpapa proudly, " ' what would the Priest do for me ? If I can't take the stone out o' the gap for meself there's no man can do it for me ! ' And, b' the Law ! He's not far wrong ! " the Master would add, being what he used to call a Strong Protestant.

Jack's few and rather wintry enthusiasms (always excepting his devotion to the Master) were reserved for things directly connected with himself and his calling, what some French commentator on one of the herdsmen of Theocritus has called " *Les instruments de sa fatigue.*"

" A garden o' spuds the like o' which isn't in three parishes ! " " A cow that ye'd rather be looking at than ateing your dinner ! " or a mule whose maraudings (locally known as " breachings ") no barrier could frustrate, by reason, according to Jack, of a singular gift that was hers.

"Is it stop that little mew-il from braychíng? Sure, the Worr'ld wouldn't stop her! Nor a six-foot wall wouldn't stop her! She's that crabbéd, when she'll throw a lep, she'll soak every leg she have up into herself, and whatever'll be before her it wouldn't surpass her!"

When his old wife died, after some forty years of faithful married life, Jack announced his loss to my grandfather with a bare simplicity.

"Good morning to your Honour. I have Peg Roche sthretched on the table."

(Roche being Mrs. Driscoll's maiden name.)

The death of one of the farm horses would have been a weightier matter. Yet I am sure that he had been a good husband to poor Peg Roche, and loved her well enough after his fashion. Only she was not one of "*les instruments de sa fatigue*"; rather, I expect, he stood in that relation to her.

* * * * *

America and National schools have created a new variety of Irishman, with his sense of humour drugged by self-conceit, with not enough education to reveal to him his ignorance, and with the bad manners inspired, apparently, by Democracy, which seems to act as an auto-intoxicant, with a result that is an indifferent substitute for the generous power of hero-worship. But here and there, even still, in the younger generation, the old type lingers, with some of its extravagance toned down, and all its good heart unchanged, and when an Irish servant is also a friend, fortunate is the family that has known how to deserve that friendship.

With all deference to the eighteenth century,

and sympathy with Grandmamma's horror of what I have heard (in England) tenderly spoken of as "a delicious little Irish accent," I must assert that our childhood knew no kinder or more carefully decorous companions than "the men about the place," and the farm-people. They may sometimes have carried indulgence and deference a little too far, as when they yielded to my brother Aylmer, aged seven, the sole conduct of a cart of manure (involving, later, total immersion of him and his clothes), but in the particulars of charming manners, and of entire refinement in their talk to us, no guardians of youth could surpass them. Happily for Ireland, the country, at all events, has still exponents of the old school of good manners and friendliness.

I bethink me of a house whereof it was said, "Sure it's a nice, quiet place, and ye can stay in it till ye'll get marrit!" and wherein a maid did indeed take up so permanent a residence that an ancient retainer of my own family exclaimed.

"And have she that gerr'l—what shall I call her—Rachel, with her always?"

The fact was admitted. It was received with a long shriek, whether expressing surprise, admiration, or jealousy, I cannot determine; possibly a little of all three.

"Look!" went on Mrs. Leary, who was a washerwoman, and having been to America, regarded herself as something of an *esprit fort*, "she might as well die with her!"

And I remember also a groom and faithful friend of long-standing, whose competence and devotion and courage, interposed to save a much valued animal from the disastrous fate that, in

these later days, threatened her. His employer tried to express in some degree the gratitude that she felt, and received the reply that, in its exquisite reticence, said so much :

"I'd do as much for the mare herself—not to mind you, Miss ! "

I have come upon an old letter of my own to Martin Ross, describing the attitude of the Drishane retainers during a time, considered by them to be one of deep humiliation, when for a few summer weeks, the house was let, for the first time in its history, to some English friends of my brother's. I will transcribe the letter, as I think that what may be called the contemporary spirit that gives life, evaporates in retelling, only substituting fancy names for those of the people referred to.

"I have been to call on that old-established County Cork family, the Jones-Robinsons of Drishane. It was a strange and not agreeable thing to ring the bell and be asked by a scorbutic-faced English maid, 'What name shall I say, please ? '

But this is incidental. . . . The attitude of our people (some of whom reluctantly serve the Foe and the Stranger) is very entertaining.

Mrs. Crowley says 'I'd *hate* to see them in it ! I'd twice sooner it was empty ! '

Mrs. Leary, who poses as Flora MacIvor to my Prince Charlie, seizes my hand and kisses it when she meets me, which she does most days when I go up to see the horses. The first day I came she rushed out of the laundry and stopped me :

'When are ye comin' back, my darlin' lady ? Send me up yer washin' ! ' (in the blackest of

conspiratorial whispers) 'I'll do it here for ye!' This would mean, I know, an alien's soap and hot water, but I should be expected to ask no questions and to assume she did it at her own house.

Margaret and Delia ran out to the yard to see me when I went round to the stables. My pose as the Banished Lord, was, I felt, admirable, so, even more so, was theirs—loving yet leaving. Bridget and the King" (these were a couple of hunters) "are in the lawn. I asked Margaret for a bit of sugar for them. Instantly about half a pound of Mrs. Jones-Robinson's sugar was brought to me, furtively, but very respectfully, in a dining-room saucer. When I am only the head of the house and the buyer of the sugar, a lump or two is given to me in the heel of Margaret's fist, but now the romantic halo of outlawry is about my brow. . . . Bridget and the King, and old Monaloo roam the lawn. Bridget and King exactly as if they were in double harness, (only you couldn't get the pole between them), as quiet in fact, as Dick MacD—— said, 'as two chickens.' (Though, as we said of Miss Bobby Bennett, you'd be looking at a chicken for a long time before you thought of Bridget.) I think she knew me. Anyhow, she advanced with a spiteful, long, grey face, and snatched the Jones-Robinson sugar out of my hand without the smallest hesitation."

My mother used to say that in Ireland the young become specialized servants by volition, not by training. Like bridge-players, they make their declaration.

"One spade! I am a gardener!" "Two

hearts! Take me as your cook!"—and they leave it to their partners to play the hand, that is to say, to their employers to teach them their job.

I have seen in a Cork paper an advertisement of one, whose name was not Biddy Burke or Molly Goggin, but might have been either, proposing herself for the offices—not generally regarded as allied—of "Lady's Companion and Housemaid"; and another of a man who offered, as his chief claim to be engaged as a gardener, the rather ambiguous assurance that he had "little or no family."

Nevertheless, it is indisputable that many of these volunteers develop, by dint of native quickness, into brilliant exponents of their selected careers. And equally indisputable that to those to whom the life is more than meat (however it may be cooked), the charm of conversation with the less sophisticated outweighs their domestic drawbacks.

My mother's elder brother (who, among his many enthusiasms included yachting) discovered, as he believed, in one of the crew of his yacht "Gyneth," a youth with a gift for cookery. Willy H—— was imported into my uncle's household, and was set to study seriously, under the cook. He was taught to wash his hands, as well as other arts, less rudimentary but not more important, in connection with his new *métier*, and when "Gyneth" went to sea Willy was shipped as *chef*. One of my cousins was of the party (and I imagine it was she who established the rule that before the preparation of each meal Willy's hands were paraded for inspection). The "Gyneth" arrived at her destination, whether Kingstown or Cowes I do not know, nor does it

signify. My uncle went ashore and met a friend, and, full as ever of genial hospitality, insisted on the friend's coming on board with him for dinner. I daresay he bragged of his newly created cook; it would have been like him to do so. Be that as it may, they went aboard, and my uncle strode forward to the galley hatch, and called gaily down the hatchway:

"Well, Willy! what have you got for us for dinner to-night?"

But Willy had also been ashore, and the answer, borne upwards on—as it were—the back of a hiccough, was "N—N—Naw—Nawthing, Sir Joshlyn!"

* * * * *

Less tragic than this, though sufficiently distressing, was the total failure of a certain job-cook to maintain the needed supply of hot water in the bathroom of a seaside cottage. When reproached she replied, with a heat that she had been unable to impart to the water:

"And how would there be hot wather, with that misfortunate owld boiler perishing out there in the scullery? Sure, didn't I hear the Major screaming in his bath! Frozen alive in it he was! And as for that owld scullery!" she continued, "That's the mountainy place altogether! I declare to God, Ma'am, if you had hair on your legs you'd see it waving with the wind that there is from all them owld doors that's in it! I has four pairs o' stockings on me this minyute, and I couldn't feel me toes no more than if I had wooden legs!"

Possibly it should be explained that the job-cook came from Cork, and to the city-dweller "the mountains" represent barbarism.

It was the same artist who, on being asked to suggest a pudding that was within the scope of her genius, fell into a session of deep, silent thought, and presently said, raptly :

" It's like a dream to me I seen a lemon on the shelf. . . . We might have a pancake so ! "

One more example may be permitted, this time gathered from a letter from Martin Ross. An embryo parlour-maid, on trial, lamented to Martin her ineradicable nervousness.

" I wouldn't mind yees," she said, miserably, " but when company'd be in it and I goin' around the table, if annyone'd spake to me I'd busht out sweatin' ! "

" This," as Martin temperately comments, " is not what one would wish in a parlour-maid."

CHAPTER XII

CHIEFLY CONCERNING BEGGARS

WITH all the enthusiasm for modernity of my mother and her compeers, when I look back on the conditions of their life I realize that they found contentment without much that now seems to us indispensable. In the times I am now dealing with there was but one postal delivery in the day. The Royal Mail arrived on an old man's back at midday and went out soon after lunch. Telegrams winged their way in the old man's pocket for the first five miles of their journey (unless, indeed, he forgot them, and brought them back next day, which would involve a further ten miles of road transport). Messages involving the food of the household, meat, and bread, and the like, had either to be dealt with by individual effort, or were entrusted to one of a train of old women, known as The Messengers.

"Any commands for the Messenger, Ma'am?" was the daily enquiry with which my mother had to cope, and the phrase has a fine feudal ring. The "Command," which was generally verbal, no matter how complicated the requirements, would then be passed on to the Messenger, who, with her fellows, daily plodded in and out of Skibbereen—which is five hilly miles from Castle Townshend. They carried on their backs enormous panniers, each bent old beast of burden

bearing about the same relation to her basket as does the man in the balloon to its globe, and on the return journey the panniers would be piled high with loaves, and joints of meat, and groceries, and all the many "commands," often of supreme intricacy, that were confidently entrusted to the memories of their bearers, the cast-iron memories of the illiterate that never betray confidence.

Amazing was the endurance of the Messengers. In all weathers, rain, snow, tempest, they made their journey, all, as I remember them, old women, most of them bare-footed. They trudged in company, and one would come upon the string of them, resting their laden panniers on a conveniently low bank, and talking hard, as though they were meeting each other for the first time. One of them grew prosperous—how, it is hard to say, for they were unfalteringly honest, and their earnings were, at the most, six shillings a week apiece—and she set up a donkey and cart. I remember this more particularly because, as it happened, the donkey was of an unusually highly strung temperament, and would bolt if a noise came behind him. When therefore, riding with my grandfather, we overtook the Messengers, it was my practice to gallop Gift, as fast as he would go, after Mrs. Donoghue's cart, in order to set her donkey going. The donkey would scuttle at full speed for a hundred yards or so, parcels would bounce out of the cart, and all the Messengers, led by Mrs. Donoghue, would shriek "Glory be to God!" and "Isn't she very arch, God bless her!" ("Archness" being a euphemism for extreme naughtiness in the young) and Grandpapa, following sedately on his big chestnut horse, would roar with laughter.

The Messengers have long since gone to their eternal rest, and they certainly earned it well. I should think the last thing that any of their poor old ghosts would be likely to do would be to "walk." But perhaps the habit is with them ineradicable. As a matter of fact the only ghost of any reputation, in or about Castle Townshend, was that of old Paddy Gow, the blacksmith, and he has not been viewed for many years; not since a cousin of mine drove through him on a jaunting-car outside the Drishane gates; an experience that, as is not surprising, seems to have "laid" him permanently.

Ghosts and beggars have alike deteriorated and decreased since the time of my childhood, in a very regrettable way. The ghosts are now mere hangers-on of the Psychical Research Society, and the beggars are few and sophisticated. A woman came to me not long since and begged as grammatically and respectably as could any London Charity Organisation (though it may be conceded that few, if any, London Charity Societies would acknowledge a contribution as did my beggar-woman, with the wish that I might be as well this day twelvemonths as she saw me now, followed by the hope that my enemies might never catch me, dead or alive).

But viewed largely and dispassionately, the type has changed. It is not long since that a cook complained to her mistress of an impudent invasion of her domains.

"And who would I find sitting in my kitchen only three old dirges from Skibbereen!—and they bowing and scraping to me, and asking me would I give them a cup o' tea!"

A melancholy falling-off this, from the old romantic beggar, who crouched, enveloped in

rags, on the hall-door steps, groaning as if in the very article of death.

When I was a child there were several important beggar women, of the right sort, in Castle Townshend. The chief of these, the one, at any rate, of whom I stood most in awe, was known indifferently as The Jingling Baby, or The Labouring Crow, titles suggestive of a Choctaw Chief, and conferred, I imagine, by herself. I don't think I can have been more than six or seven years old when she departed to another sphere—and what, one asks oneself in stupefaction, will its guardians and soul-experts make of her?—but I can very clearly recall her unspeakably hideous face, fat, brown, leathery, wrinkled like an old travelling-bag, and can see her dancing on the side of the steep village hill, whirling round and round with her rags flying, holding a parasol, all spikes and tatters, over her head, and chanting her war-song:

"Here we go! There we go!
Jingle-ing Baby!
Here we go! There we go!
Labouring Crow!"

Quite different from her, pitiable, not horrific, was a little woman known as Sparrow-legs, who would flit after my mother and my aunts, entreating them "not to forget their own Sparra' legs!"

(A peculiarity difficult indeed for those stalwart ladies to remember, since, as their grandfather, Chief Justice Bushe, is reported to have said of them, "no one could question the solidity of their understandings"!)

Different again was Nance the Fool (who may, by the curious, be found in the pages of *The Real*

Charlotte, more or less sufficiently described as a bundle of rags with a cough in it). And of yet another order were the two harpies, known, respectively, as Mrs. Joe and Mrs. Donovan. Either or both of these would, at any moment, emerge from ambush behind the big hydrangea bushes on the avenue, to beg ; Mrs. Joe with song and drunken prancings, Mrs. Donovan, who was quite six feet high, and was always draped in a long black cloak, like a shroud, with spectral stealth and stillness. These two were at their zenith in the season of hay-making, when they took employment by my Grandfather as their right, and roved the hayfields, haranguing the other haymakers to idleness, and doing nothing. Quite recently I came on a letter from my Grandfather in which he said, "I have just got one of those new American horse-hayrakers, and, thank God, I need employ Mrs. Joe and Mrs. Donovan no more."

(But I am quite sure his gratitude in this matter was premature.)

My mother has told me that, at each successive christening of my brothers and sister, Mrs. Donovan has met the *cortège*, and, with sepulchral blessings, has spat authoritatively upon the baby (a fact that has made me thankful for having been born and baptized in Corfu).

These old creatures were all of the resident, proprietory order of beggar, and held Castle Townshend in fee-simple ; they passed when I was still a child, and I have a regret, possibly unmoral and unsocial, that they have left no successors. I have, however, no great cause for complaint, as the itinerant beggar, even though weakened in quality, has not yet failed. An old man was one day announced as wishing

to speak to me. (I have yet to meet the Irish servant who will shield an employer in the case of a beggar.) I found him leaning on his stick, a haggard, gentle old fellow, with the tremor of palsy on him, clad in a long and ragged black coat. He curtseyed low to me. I asked him his history. Curtseying again, he replied, rolling each period with a skilled propriety :

" I was a sexton in the town of Buttevant, my Lady of Honour ! But I lost my hearing, Child, and the ladies of the place, Ladies of Honour, like yourself, my child, and Colonels' Ladies, they frowned upon me ! . . . They frowned upon me, *aweenoch*, upon me that fretted them with my mistakes by reason of my infirmity, and I lost my situation in the Church o' Buttevant ! "

He paused, and I uttered responsive and sympathetic sounds.

" I'm goin' the roads ever since, my dear," he resumed : " If thrippence would take me to the Lord in Heaven, I couldn't give it ! "

It is a journey that is usually accomplished without payment, but I gave him a viaticum, and he wished that God might have the Gate of Heaven open before me ; which is as much as one can expect for a shilling.

Mendicity and mendacity have but a difference of one letter between them—a begging-letter, perhaps—and the frowns of the grim colonels' ladies were possibly justified ; but for a being so old and frail, to be blown like a withered leaf along the rocky roads of the world, seems more than punishment enough for many past offences. Beggars like the old Sexton need have no propitiatory story to tell.

Happily however, for anyone who is, like me, an amateur of beggars, they are not aware of

the simple appeal of their lot in life, and they seldom fail to produce some fragment of autobiography that is more than worth the alms it hopes to elicit. It is not very long since that

"I'M GOIN' THE ROADS EVER SINCE, MY DEAR."

a little, perished-looking, wisp of an old woman came to beg for help. Perished and starved as she looked, she had, none the less, a smile full of humour, and a bright eye that defied the world's unkindness. Her agreeability was enthralling. In the course of much enjoyable conversation,

she boasted that she had once been an assistant in the workshop of a renowned bygone dressmaker, once the fashion arbiter of the neighbourhood.

"Sure didn't *I* work for Miss Driscoll!" she said, "I always had a taste for grandeur!" She held her head high. Thus might an old warrior of the First Empire say he had served under Napoleon.

"Many's the day I seen your Mamma—and a grand lady she was too—goin' in the doore to Miss Driscoll's!" She paused, and sighed, and put on an air of courtly regret. "Ah, them was the days the Genthry had money like chaff! Five guinea dhresses, an' six guinea dhresses! They'd slip their arms into them and go jumping away into their carriages . . ." She paused again, summoning up, perhaps, a vision of the ladies of West Carbery springing like kangaroos from the golden doorstep of Miss Driscoll into the high seclusion of a four-wheeled covered car. "Them was the times!" she went on. "All I has now, darlin', is a shillin' a week Outdoor Relief. I'm not up to the age for the pinsion. Ah, the world's very sevare, my dear!"

It was suggested to her that she must live on, "in spite of all," till she could claim the pension.

"I will! I will! Miss Eedtha, *achudth!*" she cried gaily. "Only for the noises in me head I'd lep the mountain! The fly itself wouldn't like to die!" She ended with a little skirl of laughter.

(Delightful gallantry that could make a mock of her own insignificance!)

Then she regarded me with a professional eye.

"Sure that's a nice cosht'chm you has on ye! O lovely stuff!" she fingered my skirt, and then

produced the age-old annual pronouncement of "the Ladies Column":

"Ah, the fashions was never as nice as what they are now! But I wouldn't fancy them hobble-skirts atall!"—she gave a lightsome, barefoot skip—"I likes to take me shtep!"

CHAPTER XIII

MUSICIANS OR ——?

I HAVE hesitated as to whether the proposed subjects of this chapter do, or do not, come under the heading of its predecessor. I think, however, that it will be fairly generally conceded that musicians—even though of what is described as the strolling variety, whose methods with their public rely more on intimidation than persuasion—are not to be classed with the beggars, who have only their afflictions or deformities with which to coerce their victims. My dictionary defines a Stroller, first (very lucidly) as "one who strolls"; secondly, as "a Vagabond," but it makes no mention of Beggars.

The legless Conneen the Piper, for instance, who strolled far and wide in his ass-butt (which is the name we have for a donkey-cart in the County Cork) having been born without other means of strolling, based his demands upon his Art, not on his infirmity. He very certainly was not a beggar. On the contrary. The beggars were those who besought him, in vain, to go away. (But of such were not my brothers and I.)

Nor could anyone consider such an artist as old Jerry from Ballydehob a beggar; Jerry was a fiddler, not so much born, as made, by the disaster of losing one of his legs early in life.

There was nothing for him but to take to what I have heard called "idle work," and turn musician (and thereby, as I believe, discover his true calling). With the aid of a "peg-leg," and a donkey and cart, he travelled his world of West Carbery, moving—as was said of a lady of fashion—"in circles" and recurring like the moon in his appointed seasons. The lost leg may have determined his career, but some spring of real music was in him. He played old airs that wandered, and rose, and fell, as if they were indeed airs, little winds in a fold of the hills. Some of them had strangely familiar turns in them, and one might sometimes recognise a well-known tune, such as *Annie Laurie*, wavering through the medium of Jerry's fancy, like a thing seen through running water. But above all, he had a store of enchanting jigs and reels, with names nearly as provocative as their measures. "*Jinny picking cockles*"; "*Tearing the calico*"; "*Tho' she's from the mountains her stockings are white*"; this last a specially admirable tune that I succeeded in learning from him. How his warped, almost hairless, old bow whipped the jigs, as it did, out of the battered and curveless box that was his fiddle, it is hard to say. It was the perfection of the rhythm that made them inspiring; no foot could forbear to shuffle to the lift that was in his playing. Once I told him so, not without enthusiasm. He rejected my admiration.

"My Lady, I'm owld now, and the owld fiddle is bet out, like meself. I can make no fine sounds of music."

He shook his head. I daresay, like old Peter the horse-trainer, the thought had come to him of the days of his "bloom." He would play no more. He stumped on his peg-leg down the

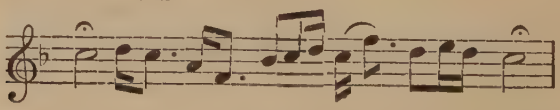
avenue to where the donkey-cart waited for him, embowered in hydrangeas, and departed.

Said I not well that he was an artist?

* * * * *

The legless Conneen the Piper was of an earlier date than Jerry, and of a different mould; He would, I am now inclined to think, come more nearly under the second definition of the word "Stroller." I may wrong him, but vagabond he looked. The spare force that was in him had gone into his great shoulders and long arms. He had a big, heavy, yellow face, and wild eyes, and on either side of his long jaws hung slabs of inky hair. He might have been a *Sans-Culottes* of the Terror (and the designation would have been specially appropriate to him). He played the Irish Pipes; he and his ass-butt, necessarily inseparable, were generally to be met with moored at the door of a public-house. I seem always to visualise him in front of a now past public-house, that we were accustomed to speak of as "Catheriknee O'Leary's" (not from any anatomical peculiarity of its owner, rather from the fact that the painter of the sign over her door had miscalculated his spacing, and the final "ne" of Catherine had been added, like a top-note, above the line).

Thence, like his comrade, the Pied Piper, he summoned all the children of the village. The first long squeal, ending in the invariable opening gambit of the pipes,



brought them all running up the steep street, that

CONNEEN THE PIPER

has the harbour at its foot, and the hills beyond; children, many-coloured as flowers; yellow heads and red and brown, and the bright eyes and cheeks of the soft south, and pink, bare legs and feet, pressing round the cart, and in it the heavy, black, crippled fellow, with his saturnine yellow face, squatted in the straw in his ass-butt, surveying them, while his quick fingers went capering up and down the long chanter of the Pipes.

It seems to me now that it would have been a picture worth trying to paint, but at ten or eleven years old, what mainly concerned me was not being allowed to shove in among the village children to listen to Conneen.

I am reminded of a tale of another piper, but he was blind, and a Connemara man. He was playing one Sunday afternoon at a cross-roads, for country boys and girls to dance. The priest came by, and found the dance in full swing, and disapproved. The blind piper played away, unconscious of condemnation, seeing nothing, hearing only his own strident strains. The priest strode up to him, and shouted:

"What are ye playing there? Don't ye know the third Commandment?"

(Which, in the Roman Catholic Church, is that which enjoins that the Sabbath day shall be kept holy)

But the Piper, believing it to be the name of a jig, replied:

"I do not, your Reverence, but maybe if ye'd fishle it for me, I could play it!"

* * * * *

Another of the bygone musicians was Phaudrig Ruadth, a sinister being, with a huge red beard, who played a penny whistle, burying it in the

bushes of his beard and producing thence a shrill twittering of jigs. He was wont to get drunk, and to lie, sleeping off his potations, by the side of the road that goes through Uncle Harry's Wood, and the governesses, with scared, sidelong looks, would hustle their fascinated charges past his enormous prostrate form.

There were also occasional hurdy-gurdy men, with monkeys, warmly welcomed by us, and a still more occasional German Band, that, I believe, played atrociously, but was none the less rapturously received.

The thought of the band reminds me of the day that Cameron and I heard the fairy music. It was, I think, in the year that *Alice in Wonderland* was published: I know that the beloved "Alice" had recently been presented to us, and we were reading of her adventures, lying on the floor in the sunny "Green room," Grandmamma's sitting-room. It was high summer, and the three windows of the room were wide open; from one of them one can see out over the harbour to the open sea, the two others look on the croquet ground and towards the avenue. Suddenly we heard, from, as it seemed, the avenue, a rushing outbreak of music, richer and more delicious—as I remember it—than any music that I have heard before or since. It swept in through the open windows in a wave of glory, and, the German Band being our standard of musical greatness, we instantly ascribed the wonder to it, and lay, listening, spell-bound, until it ceased. Then we hurled ourselves downstairs to ask for more. But there was no band there, and we two, only, had heard the music. And there the incident closed. Any child will understand how, by the elders, we were pooh-poohed and derided into

silence. But in the fulness of time there came to me a strange corroboration of an experience that was, no doubt, attributed to imagination, since, in those days, that maid-of-all-work, the Subconscious Self, had not been invented as a standing explanation of all that is unexplainable.

A gardener, elderly and respectable, was discussing with one of my cousins, old, forgotten, far-off things, and he told him this story:

"Meself and Timsey Dunnigan were working at Seafield in the lower garden. It was the month of June, and the Major was in Scotland with the Militia. We heard a band coming along the Mall" (the road outside the garden); "Cornets and Drums, and Fifes and all—the biggest Band I ever heard. It went down the hill past us, outside the wall, and on down to the sea to the Coast-guard station. 'Did ye ever hear the like o' that for grand music, Timsey?' I says to Timsey. 'I did not, Pat,' Timsey answers to me. But not a one in the village, nor, in the Coast-guard station, heard it, only ourselves! . . . Well, I was telling this one time to Thade Mac Sweeny, and Thade said he was going down to Sir Joscelyn's Quay one night, and it late, about one o'clock. He saw a girl coming up the hill to him, and it was a girl called Mary Travers, and she was making love to a chap that was on the Revenue Cruiser. Thade thought it was too late for her to be out, and he said it to her. She made him no answer, and he grabbed at the shawl she had on her, and it was like nothing, and there was no one there! And at the same time he heard a band playing in the lane behind him. Beautiful music, and very loud—'tis what he said the lane was filled with the music. Thade was frightened—and no blame to him!—and

away with him in a hurry down the hill to Nancy-co's, that lived that time in the little house on the quay. He knocked hard at the door, and the music was following him, and it was all about him. Nancy-co's husband opened the door, and he retched out the hand and pulled Thade in the door. 'And 'tis a good thing for you that the house was here before you!' says he to Thade; 'It's a bad job for them that that music follows!' says he."

There are certain greedy and persistent people who demand to have a finish found for every story, instead of leaving it to drift, artistically, in infinity. For them I will add that Thade pursued a prosperous career for many years, in spite of the portent, but in the end it fulfilled itself. One black night he walked over the side of a quay in Cork, and was drowned, grasping in vain at the side of his own ship. *

* * * * *

The wandering players wander our way no more. It may be that they have only abandoned West Carbery for more affluent regions, but it seems more probable that in these wild, later days the tribe has died out, even as the old harpers of Ireland faded away in or about the '98. Ireland, judging by her lovely folk-songs, was once a country that ran with music as she runs with streams. Music may still be in her, but, for the most part, it is running underground, and the occasional gush of song that bursts

* I may mention that although I have never again, since that long-ago summer morning, heard the Fairy Band, my sister has twice heard it, the second time no later than December, 1922, when, indeed, no bands nor musicians were wandering in West Carbery.

forth at peasant gatherings, or at public competitions, is dedicated to the Muse of History, who, as all Irish people know, has little to say to her sister, the Muse of Harmony.

To what extent music is fostered by official teaching in the National Schools is difficult, as yet, to determine. I have indeed heard of a school at which the children were paraded to exhibit to visitors their musical attainments. According to the account given to me, a row of "little scholars" stood up, and at a word of command proceeded, startlingly, to howl a species of dirge, in Irish. The visitors, awestruck, enquired its meaning. The teacher explained brightly:

"Well, 'tis a song that's sung at funerals, and it's lamenting that there's only butter-milk to drink, and not whisky!"

* * * * *

While I am thinking of music, I must speak of the music of our old parish church of Castlehaven, that stands on the top of the hill over the sea. The fifty-two grey stone steps by which it is reached, emulate Jacob's Ladder in steepness, and have tried the wind of many unpunctual organists and choristers. It was built during the first years of the last century when the parish had many Protestants of all degrees, and it is many times too large for the present need. My grandfather, who was very fond of music, has often told me what the church-music was like in the days of his youth. The singing seems then to have been strictly congregational (that ideal of good clergymen, and *bête noire* of wicked organists). A Tate and Brady psalm would be announced, and the sexton, whose aggressively

English name was Ned Stroud, would lie down on his stomach, under the seat of his pew, with his flute, and thence would send forth—as it were impersonally—a confidential hint to the congregation as to the note on which they should combine for the unaccompanied assault on the psalm. To what extent the hint was taken has not been recorded. In a neighbouring church, where congregational singing also prevailed, I have heard of how one of my grandfather's brothers was driven to offer a criticism. He, like Grandpapa, had a stiff-necked habit of standing during the prayers, and if he wished to speak, he spoke aloud, firmly and resonantly. Thus it was that at the conclusion of a violently congregational effort, a firm and resonant voice was heard, saying reflectively:

"The devil such howling ever I heard!"

It is a simple comment, but is one that has often helped me in a like extremity.

Later, in Castlehaven Church, followed the civilizing era of my great-uncle, the Reverend Charles Bushe, and he, abetted by my mother, and my Coghill uncles and aunts, superseded Ned Stroud's flute with a harmonium. (An act that may possibly have added to the indignation of one of my aboriginal great-aunts, who is said to have declared that the parish was being "Be-Bushed, be-Coghilled, and be-devilled!")

A singularly cheerless gallery, built, as an incised slate still testifies, for "The use of the Poor of this Parish," was taken over as an organ-loft, and thenceforward a choir, of ever-varying dimensions and capabilities, pontificated to the rest of the parish. My mother played the harmonium, my Uncle Joscelyn, his sisters, and their cousins from the Rectory were the choir.

The harmonium endured for many years, only expiring of asthma and bronchitis long after a musical rector had banished it to the school-house, and replaced it with an organ. Since then the church-music has passed through many vicissitudes, from grave to gay, from lively to severe, and, since the organist has ever been an amateur, liveliness has predominated. My mother deposited me on the organ-bench, in her stead, as soon as my legs were long enough to reach the pedals, and there, more or less, I have remained. Lively incidents have not lacked during the years that I have "presided on the organ bench." (It is hardly necessary to say that it has been laid down by the best newspapers that no one has ever been known to play an organ. The organist presides; the blower does the rest.) There was, for example, a Christmas Day when my diary says, "Anthem pretty fair, but wanted more practice. At the last moment made appalling discovery that there was only one copy in gallery. H. and I, by master-effort, made three more during service, and mother said I was 'a mass of impiety.'"

(My mother, as a retired organist, was instant and trenchant in criticism of Church matters. I may instance her report of a Harvest Festival in a neighbouring parish church. She said the decorations consisted of a small hayrick, like a beehive, in the chancel, and one putrid vegetable marrow. Asked what the choir was like, she replied warmly, minting the epithets as she spoke.

"Screech-cats and trash-bags!")

Although I do not attempt to dispute my mother's estimate of me, I should like to say that, in all my massive impiety, I have not as

yet equalled the effort of one of my cousins, who sometimes undertook my duties as organist for me. The organ-gallery is at the west end of the church, and when the creed was said, my cousin (whose identity shall be shrouded by the symbol X) descended from the bench in order to face to the east, and, since she did not play the pedals, she kept their special stops in, and stood on them. The keyboard was behind her, and at the accustomed place in the creed she bowed herself with due reverence. Unhappily, the blower had kept the bellows going; the space between bench and keyboard was narrow, while X, it may be admitted, was not. Thus it was that, as she bowed, there was crushed out, "from the heart of the organ," one widespread chord, a great Amen that took some time before it "trembled away into silence," because X did not at first realize that she was sitting on the keyboard.

CHAPTER XIV

"D'YE KEN JOHN PEEL—"

"THE supreme subject of Hunting," that I have hitherto evaded, now presents itself as a river in flood, and I stand with half-reluctant feet on its brink. Martin Ross and I have so often made resolutions never again to write of hunting, and have so often found ourselves swept away by that strong stream! During those years when the consequences of a bad fall with hounds kept her out of the saddle, there have been times (few, I'm afraid) when in my letters to her I have deliberately refrained from the dangerous subject, and have even vaunted myself of my self-restraint; with, for sole result, such a *cri du cœur* as the following:

"Tell me about it! Every field, every gap, is of deadly interest to me. I realize them all with sick intensity!"

I imagine there may be others who are in like case—obsessed by this headstrong emotion, that, as with Love and a Cough, cannot be hid or subdued. Katharine Rowan, the girl we wrote about in *Dan Russel the Fox*, knew "the dream and the delirium," "the limited world that contained but one idea, never again while life lasted, to let the hounds get out of her sight!" We, like Katharine, have known "the glory of feeling a big horse jumping big out of his stride,"

while the hounds "fleeted and sped, and the river of their music flowed back to her," and like her too, we have "galloped in it, and there was nothing else in Heaven or earth."

There may come, occasionally, moments of sanity, when something untoward has occurred to send one hunting on wheels, and, through a consequently jaundiced eye, one sees afar the chase. How slowly they go! With what apparent effort do they surmount what insignificant obstacles! And the hounds, how senseless their divergences from the line one has actually *seen* the fox go! "Oh!" one thinks, as I have heard an old countryman cry, distractedly, "Why the *Divil* don't the dogs get into the smell?"

And yet one knows that to be one of those little, sluggish, despicable, bucketting marionettes, would obliterate past and future, and leave nothing but a strained yet ecstatic present, and a conviction that Alexander the Great, and Julius Cæsar, never knew such effort and such achievement!

I have been an M.F.H. for twelve years, and an acting Honorary Secretary for about half as many more, and in these capacities, and especially in the latter, I am aware that what Martin has called the Wine of Life may contain an occasional flavour of bitterness, and not be without that touch of Greek Fire that is known in Ireland as "The Fighting Drop." But, none the less, where is the vintage to compare with it? Once more that ancient resolve of reticence shall be broken, and I know well that though there are some who may pass over this chapter, there are others—lunatics at large, with no more sense than myself—who won't!

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"D'YE KEN JOHN PEEL——"

It was in the autumn of 1886 that, after a long sleep, hunting awoke again in West Carbery, and the children and grand-children of those who once, with the old West Carbery hounds, had "*ridden out so gallantly in search of a fox*," had their first introduction to the finest sport in the world, and took to it as young ducks take to water.

We owed this initiation to some sporting and affluent railway contractors, who, finding that their work held them for a winter in the wilds, arranged with the Master of a small private pack, that was kennelled some five-and-twenty miles up the line to Cork, to relieve their boredom by giving the country one day's hunting a week.

The "young entry," that is to say, the sons and daughters of the land, could hardly have had a less orthodox introduction to a sport in which ceremonial plays so important and enchanting a part. But the root of the matter was there, and none of us cared, or even realized that it was unusual that hounds should run sheep, cur-dogs, and cats, on their way to the meet, or knew that a Whipper-in's costume seldom consists of a greasy tweed cap, torn brown gaiters, and an old pink coat of so voluminous a cut as to suggest a divided skirt, and also—which was perhaps as well—to enfold in mystery the nature of his breeches.

There is, in the County Cork, a clan that traces its descent to the Norman invaders of Great Britain, and, in the course of the centuries, has increased and multiplied, and spread, upwards and downwards, as is the habit of clans. Its greatness (as well as the prevailing weather of Cork) may be indicated by the generally accepted statement that if, in Patrick Street, a

gentleman, unknown, should pass to you the time o' day, you will be safe if you respond.

"Why then, Captain Beamish, it is a soft day indeed!"

The upper branches of the tree are as far from the lower as are Highland Chieftains from their clansmen, and the point of divergence between high and low is automatically decided by the pronunciation of the family name.

Abetted by my first huntsman—a County Cork man—I had been in process of buying a horse from one of the clan, and I have said to my collaborator, "But are you sure that horse of Mr. Beamish's will jump?"

On which the collaborator:

"Is it jump? Sure he will! That Baimish is a very airy man!"

(A fact that, in such a case, made assurance doubly sure.)

Old Dick Beamish has been dead for years, and I am afraid his type, like that of John Peel, is dying out. He stood where the brook and river meet, between the Baimishes and the Beamishes. Those who heard his voice driving a bargain at a fair, or rebuking a countryman for heading a fox, would unhesitatingly have put him among the Baimishes; but at the head of his hounds he had a fine dignity, and that touch of unconscious authority that takes respect for granted, and therefore receives it. He was a big man, broad-shouldered, and handsome, with a vast red beard and a quick eye, and he had a brogue as big as himself, that rolled slowly and sonorously from out of the red depths of his beard. He belonged to a class that is rather difficult to place, and without attempting anything so invidious, I will say only that, in my

experience, Dick and his like, for all their big brogues, and lack of education in the wider sense, never shamed the drop of gentle blood that was in them, and possessed moreover a gift of good manners—notably when they were dealing with ladies—a punctilious deference, an implied admiration, a sort of chivalrous respect, that was infinitely engaging, and seems to me to have been quite special to themselves and their era.

To see Old Dick riding Old Harry was to see precisely the right man in the right place. Old Harry was a "Shán Bui," that is to say a yellow horse with black points, and a donkey's black trademark down his spine. Already when, as a middle-aged horse, Dick sold him to my brother Aylmer, then "commencing M.F.H.," legend had formed about him, and it was said that, among other feats, Dick had ridden him up and down one of those railway step-ladders that are like inverted V's. I myself have seen him—and this we have told in the story of "A grand filly"—jump a stile, changing feet on the flag on the top, and coming down by the steps "like a Christian," as the Whip said, who was riding him. He could be as wicked as he was clever. If a stranger were put on his back he would exhibit a method of bucking so disintegrating that few could sit it out. He offered Martin Ross a sample of his skill, one day, but after some minutes of acute exertion on both sides (for Martin had an ash plant) Harry refrained. Another time, with hounds, believing himself to have been kept the wrong side of the covert by his rider, an inexperienced young sailor, he fell into passion and bolted, and, charging sideways into a wire fence, he flayed the skin off his own neck and sent the sailor to hospital. Harry's hunting was

stopped, and a cob, whose box adjoined his, took his place as the Whip's horse. The first night after this occurred Harry opened the stable door and went forth to the lawn-tennis ground, and there, under the Master's window, executed what must, judging by the ruined turf, have been a concentrated step-dance. The second night he opened the door of the cob's box and step-danced on the prostrate cob, hoof marks on the victim's ribs bewraying him. He was a plain, thick-set horse, of about fifteen-hands-three-inches, and his eye was "as wise as a man's." Once, several years after he had sold him, Old Dick came to Drishane, and went into Harry's stable to see him. He came out with tears in his eyes.

"The old fellow licked my hands all over," says Dick, "I thought he'd ha' forgotten me!"

* * * * *

The country of "Mr. Beamish's Hounds" was some thirty miles away from us, of which the railway accounted for but little over twenty. Therefore it was that when West Carbery riders were invited to have a day with the hounds in their native wilds, Aylmer and I knew that a very skilled diplomacy would be required if horses were to be conceded, and other difficulties smoothed (which is a delicate reference to the price of a horse-box to Dunmanway). But it was Christmas-time, when hearts are soft, and 6.30 a.m. on the morning of the momentous day saw us riding in the dark to the station. I was riding a tall bay horse of my father's, named Sorcerer, a very "big-jumped" horse, and a perfect hunter. Aylmer's mount was a young bay mare, named Vesta, whom he had trained

himself, a competent if intermittent jumper, who knew more about her trade as a hunter than she was willing to admit.

At Dunmanway station we fell in with some other riders from our country, and we all clattered together along the wide Cork coach-road to the meet, and felt that West Carbery had risen creditably to the occasion. The meet was a special one, and the day one of high festival. The hospitality of some old friends, whose coverts were to be drawn, had ensured for Aylmer and me, and the horses, a rest, and what was lightly described by our host as "a bite of something to be going on with," and meant a breakfast whose attractions only yielded to the arrival of the hounds. I have exhumed a letter from myself to Martin Ross, written with an enthusiasm that spares no detail, and it opens with a description of that jovial, hospitable house, and its kind and light-hearted people, that makes sad reading enough now. However, in that enthusiastic letter there were no premonitions of what, some thirty years later, was to be the future of a country that was once as gay as it was good-natured; all was *couleur de rose*, or rather of the precise shade of the new pink coat that the Master had sported for the occasion.

I find it entered that:

"Dick was *most* affectionate to A. and me, and hoped he would be able to show us spoort. He looked as gorgeous as ever, and was, as usual, surrounded by all our old friends, Woodboine, and Waurrior, and Saulamon, and Jaally, and among them a couple and a half of long-legged black things, with long ears,

and melancholy faces, that Dick calls Kerry Beagles (I mean Baigles), and look like harriers in deep mourning."

The first covert to be drawn was a long thick wood, that covered the side of a hill so steep as to be impossible for horses, and almost impossible for a man on foot. The Master dismounted, sending on his horse to the western end of the covert, and climbing the bank of the wood was swallowed up in jungle, from whose depths we could dimly hear him cheering the hounds in the well-remembered way:

"Thatsy-atsy-atsy, my darlin's! Find him for me Thruelass and Naygress, good bitchies!"

The field, consisting of about fifteen to twenty riders, and a countless crowd of foot-runners waited in the long fields below the wood. There was a fox on foot. Every now and then a hound would utter a whistling whimper, "and once" says the letter, gushing a little, but, in the circumstances, forgivably:

"the lovely little fox-face was developed, like a photograph—so stilly and like a breath do they come—in the middle of a furze bush on the bank of the wood, quite near where we had been ordered to wait! It vanished, and in a minute we heard the hounds open with a sudden burst. They came crashing through the covert with a beautiful cry, heading for the eastern end of the wood. Then, as suddenly the cry ceased. The fox had been headed at the end of the covert and the hounds had overrun the scent."

I well remember how, from the depths of the wood, Old Dick's comments rose, like black

smoke. Then after a long, silent, heart-breaking pause, the chant began again.

"Thatsy-atsy-atsy, my darlin's! . . ."

The local riders' laboured assurances that all would yet be well, did but confirm us in our dejection. We had offered such ourselves on similar occasions, and knew what they were worth.

> "At last," says the letter, "after about half an hour, we heard very faint shrieks from the far side of the hill. We all thundered to the west end of the covert, and found that the whole pack had got away with a fox, a mile ahead of Old Dick, and that he had slipped off after them without giving so much as a touch of the horn to warn the field!"

This was a known practice of Dick's, who was keener as a huntsman than as a Master, and liked elbow-room. He had it now. A speck of red was visible in the blue distance of the hills, and even as our wild eyes snatched at it, it went out like a spark. We were all on a road that went straggling away into those unknown hills. Everyone seemed to have a different theory and plan, and while the *illuminati* wrangled feverishly as to what, in this wind, the fox's point would be, Aylmer and I, having no conflicting ideas to hamper us, and being young and frantic, went away like a storm across country, steering simply for the spot at which we had seen the extinguishing of that fatal spark, our hearts dark with the darkness of the nethermost pit as we thought of what the people at home—and especially Tommy the coachman—would say to us when they heard that hounds had gone away with a fox, while we

were left, as Aylmer said with emotion, " rotting at the covert-side ! "

Soon we came up with some of the foot-runners, and thenceforward, little fringes of country boys on the hills waved us on, shouting directions,

" but," my letter says, " they all gave different advice, and told us to ' folly on ' to places we had never heard of. It was horrible country. Rotten fences, and high stone gaps, and places that defy description, being mysteries of knives and mud. The horses went splendidly and without a mistake, until we got into a *bohireen* with a low wall across it, and on the farther side of the wall a stream full of boulders, and beyond the stream a sort of squashy bank. Sorcerer, who was pulling hard, swept over the whole thing without an instant of hesitation, but Vesta wouldn't have it. It certainly was a very ugly place. A. whipped and spurred in vain. Then he yelled to me to go on, and as we had made an agreement to that effect, I did so for about half a mile. Then I saw some riders far away to the north, and I was just going after them when I saw A. coming on like mad—having lifted Vesta over the place on the ends of his spurs !—and I waited for him ; and just then, on a hill about a mile away, we saw going like the ——"

The simile is neither original nor expressive, and is superfluous to the tale. What we saw were the hounds, and Old Dick with them, and between them and us was an immense turf-bog with no possible passage across it. Dives and Lazarus were not more effectually divided. The question was whether to go round the bog to the left, or to the right. It was one of those terrible moments

that only occur in allegories or in hunting, when all depends on a single and instant decision. . . . We took the bog left-handed, and on its farther verge we fell in with a local rider.

"They're after taking a wheel to the east!" he shouted, and began to steer right-handed.

We were shaken. But when we had seen them they were certainly going west. We "follied on" left-handed. After another half-mile over boggy fields we reached a road, and then from farther down the road——

> "A country boy began to howl something to us about going south. We turned south, Sorcerer nearly pulling my arms out from rage at not finding the hounds, and there and then did we see the whole pack coming streaming down a hill, in full cry, and not a man within a mile of them! They had taken the 'wheel' to the east, and it was THE FOX that the boy had seen running South!
>
> When they got to the road they checked. Then was our time! We rode for all we were worth and got to them while they hesitated, and whipped them on to where the boy was shouting, and then off they went again with a scream, and Aylmer and I *alone* with them!"

The letter here becomes still more hysterical, but, omitting some of its transports, I will leave it to finish the story.

> "The fox took us over awful country, heather, and rocks, and bogs, and we had to ride just about as hard as the horses could leg it, for the hounds were racing with their heads up on a red-hot scent. An adorable Kerry baigle (Naygress, I think), was leading

them, and her yowls were enough to tear the very heart out of you—like the most piercing old woman at a funeral! It was all we could do to keep them in sight over that breakneck country, but we did it somehow, and after about twenty-five minutes they checked suddenly, and began to rage round a huge cairn of stones. A. was off in an instant and shoved his crop into a hole between the stones, and before you could say 'shnipes,' out jumped the fox into the very jaws of the whole pack! They were so taken by surprise that while they were snapping right and left, he had darted like lightning between their legs, and was away with the hounds, Aylmer, Sorcerer and I (dragging Vesta with me), all practically on top of him!

"But he beat us. In less than a hundred yards there were two big rocks, and he wriggled in between them just as Naygress made a grab at his brush! I couldn't have believed anything could have escaped as he did. I am glad when a good fox gets away, but I must admit that A. and I could have cried. There we stood, and stared at each other—silent upon a peak near Dunmanway—while the poor hounds raved round the rocks, and tried to writhe through a slit that only a fox in extremis, or the blade of a knife could get into.

"After about ten minutes Old Dick got up. He was awfully nice to us, and said civil things, and regretted that we hadn't killed. . . ."

Thus the letter; and even now I can feel the thrill and the glow of that wondrous twenty-five minutes.

We hadn't the brush to bring home, but we

had, at all events a creditable story for Tommy the coachman.

* * * * *

"And ye bested all them Eastern fellas?" said Tommy the coachman. "Be-domn, but I'm as glad as if ye give me a straw bed!"

A mysterious metaphor, typifying the extreme of human aspiration.

CHAPTER XV

THE WEST CARBERY HUNT

THE Great Dunmanway Run pâssed into history; its glories were never repeated. Old Dick and his hounds remained in their native mountains and visited us no more, nor we them. Hunting seemed to have died for us, but West Carbery had tasted blood, and a few years later—to be exact, in 1891—things in general became suddenly propitious, and my brother Aylmer applied himself to the congenial task of getting a pack of foxhounds together and hunting the old West Carbery country that, some sixty years earlier, his grandfather had hunted before him.

Elsewhere I have described our early efforts with the pack that came to us with the rather sinister title of "Clare's Rioters." Rioters or no, they showed us the best of sport. Aylmer was his own huntsman, and in a very short time he discovered a *flair* in the matter of casting that I have not often seen equalled. With this he had the true huntsman's knack of slipping across country without apparent effort, and he had also the valuable asset of being regarded by the country people (and not without reason) as what is variously described as "an arch boy," or "a bit of a lad," in other words, one who might be trusted to show sport in more places than the hunting field. There was a farmer-neighbour

of the Kennels, who, wishing to score a success against the young M.F.H., came by night and carried off one of the old "Kennel-horses," and took a couple of days' work out of him before the exigencies of the Kennel-larder caused the discovery of the theft. He then wrote and offered to buy the captive at carrion price. This, it need hardly be said, was a very practical joke that demanded reprisal, and reprisal did not fail. I was away from home at the time, and a letter from Martin Ross shall finish the story:

"On Friday night, it being good moonlight, Aylmer, with Crowley, Jimmeen, Danny-boy, and other of his merry men, went off to Pat Harrington's, and (as the policeman said of the public-house he was watching) concealed themselves in full view of the premises. Jimmeen was sent to the door with a note from A., and thus drew off all the dogs and people to the front of the house, and A. and his gang then rose from their lair, crawled into the stable and took therefrom a monster, hideous, brown horse of Pat H.'s, kicking and protesting. With a halter they dragged it right through the country to the Rectory road, knocking down two big walls of Pat's to get it out. They got it into the cow-house at Drishane at 10.30 p.m., and Hildegarde and I went forth and assisted in the task of painting it in various designs with red distemper. The horse was awfully thin, so we traced every rib with red; we put P.H. on his flanks, zebra stripes on his neck, spectacles round his eyes, with many other adornments. He looked perfect, even in the candlelight, with his frightful, sullen, Roman nose, and sour, out-

raged eye. Crowley and Danny-boy tended the distemper bucket and other accessories, and giggled incessantly throughout. Next morning (which was, as you have, no doubt, realized, April 1st), P.H., who had of course been told who the robbers were, sent over early for his horse, as he wanted him to go to the fair. I regret to say that, by a mistake, he was given to the man before we could view the start. 'He was as red as I'd wish him to be—' says Crowley. P.H. deployed on him for an hour with two men and buckets of water, but couldn't get the red off, and finally had to borrow a horse to go to the fair. He met A. next day, and in much very untrammelled language expressed his high approbation of the jest."

I remember one day that the hounds were drawing a wood, high over a road, and Aylmer was walking the covert with them. Presently a voice was heard, far up the height, saying something that was not Excelsior in connection with a rabbit. An old man, standing on the road, cocked his head at the hill.

"Who is that above?" he enquired.

"That's Mr. Elmore Somerfield," says someone.

"Ah-ha-ha! The Rogue!" said the old man, chuckling confidentially to himself.

Higher commendation could not be expressed.

From these things it may be gathered that my brother's time of office had been one of notable success, even though in the sixth year of his Mastership he had had to face the greatest calamity that can befall an M.F.H. This was the loss of the entire pack from dumb rabies. The blow fell in the end of August, 1897, at a

time when careful weeding, and breeding, and buying, had built up a beautiful little pack of about twenty couples. There came an unforgettable

"AH-HA-HA! THE ROGUE!"

Sunday morning when, as I walked home from Church, Aylmer met me with a white and stricken face, and said that Countess had shown

some of the dread symptoms of hydrophobia. And the tragedy of it was that all the young entry had come back from " walk," and Countess had been back in Kennels for no more than three weeks.

It was a summer when hydrophobia had been a constant menace, and there had been many scares and many escapes. A big greyhound with unseeing eyes, and straws in his foam-dripping jaws, had run past Aylmer's two children in the Drishane avenue, but had not turned from his course. On the same day, by a strange chance, the same dog had dashed past Aylmer himself in the streets of Skibbereen. The greyhound's course had covered a wide stretch of country, and in his track, week after week, disaster followed.

Countess and her brood had been in one of our stables, absolutely, as we believed, out of harm's way. Yet, when I heard these dire tidings, there flashed back into my mind the memory of a July night when Countess' mellow bay had broken the stillness, and I had wondered what had called her forth from her nursery. Poor Countess was shot at once, and, after three tense days, four other hounds showed the first signs of trouble. I saw them in the Kennels, sitting up on the bench with their backs to the wall, silent and motionless, with feverish bright eyes, staring at us unrecognisingly—the dear hounds, who had never before failed to greet us with extravagant affection. . . . It was hopeless to expect that any of them could now escape, and it was decided that a poison, as speedy and merciful as was possible, should be used in putting the remainder out of a world that had at the last showed them no mercy. A telegram was sent to

Cork, and Aylmer and I rode to the railway station to bring out what was needed with all speed. Two policemen, with their rifles, were left on guard, with Tim Crowley, the Kennel-huntsman and Whip. The poison had to come from Cork by train, and there were some inevitable delays. When Aylmer at length reached the Kennels, he found that every hound was dead. Their bodies lay in the kennel yard—a sight of unbelievable horror, yet now a relief.

Anyone who has ever seen a dead hound will know how utter and complete is the dominion of death over him. With other animals it may sometimes be possible to be deceived by some lingering semblance of life, but with a foxhound, when the spirit has fled, what remains is no more than a piteous travesty of the creature one has loved. It is better not to think of what such a sight meant to the man who had bred the hounds and hunted them.

This was what had happened. Two of the dog-hounds, Limerick and Harbinger, had passed suddenly from the still and awful phase in which I had seen them, to raging madness. The policemen were unable to shoot them from outside the enclosure, and could not venture within. There was a ghastly possibility of a general fight, between the mad hounds and those in whom the disease was only beginning, a slaughter too horrible to think of. Tim Crowley was a young man, and a very daring one, and he loved the hounds. He went into the hounds' lodging-house, where were Limerick and Harbinger, and with his bare hands he caught Limerick by the back of the neck and the stern, and dragged him out, and called to the policemen to shoot. The constable fired, but, in his agitation, he missed

the hound, and narrowly missed hitting the reckless fellow who held it. Crowley loosed his grip, and, snatching the rifle from the constable, shot the hound himself. Then he went back into the Kennels, and, one by one, dragged out hound after hound, and shot every one of them with his own hand.

When I saw him, an hour or so later, he looked as a man might look who has seen hell. Silent, with an ashen face, and eyes still lit by a wild-fire glare.

* * * * *

We wrote to the sporting papers and told what had befallen us, and the response from the English and Irish Hunts was as instant as it was generous. Aylmer had offers of more hounds than he wanted, and one of the very first and warmest of the letters of sympathy came from Mrs. Cheape, "The Squire," Master of the Bentley Harriers, promising two couple of her famous pack. This was in the beginning of September, and by the end of the month the new Kennels, on a new site that my father gave, had been built, and thirty couple of hounds were established in them.

These hounds, or their sons and daughters, were the pack that, six years later, I bought from the Hunt Committee when the crucial question of my brother's successor arose, and answer came there none, until I, not without misgivings of my own, and with many dissuasions from my family, offered to buy them from the Committee, and take them on without a guarantee, trusting to luck and other assistance to keep them going; but chiefly to luck.

That was in April, 1903, and because, at that

Photo: Elliott & Fry, Ltd.

THE WEST CARBERY FOXHOUNDS AT DRISHANE, 1908

time, there was but one other Lady Master of Foxhounds (Mrs. T. H. R. Hughes, of the Neuadd Fawr), who had only taken office the preceding year, the West Carbery country sprang at a bound into the limelight, and the Hunt Committee who had (for want of a better!) accepted a woman as their M.F.H., were not sure whether to pride themselves on their liberal views, or to put their heads under the bedclothes and disown their disgraced position. I venture to think they adopted the former course; certainly they gave me all the help they could, and suffered the newspapers' nine days of wondering with composure.

The photography that for the Hounds and me was involved, was a more serious matter. In the story of "The Pug-nosed Fox," Martin Ross and I attempted to expound what it is to bring into becoming and suitable position, and keep there, twenty couple of hounds, three horses, and their riders, and I find in my diary that not even Martin's great and rare gift of yelling like a hurt dog, awoke in the hounds an interest sufficient to dispel their suspicions and alarms, though even the much-tried photographer had to allow, sourly, that it was "very laughable." I have many times endured this ordeal of photography, with its resultant certainty of appearing in print with a hat over one eye, and a wide-open mouth of cajolery or objurgation, addressed to straying hounds. Nothing that I know of equals its power to inspire anxiety and exacerbation, and to inflict acute inconvenience, save, possibly, a visit to a tailor to try on riding-kit. But that, for sheer suffering, is easily *hors concours*.

I held the Mastership for two periods, the first of five, the second, after a break of three years

(during which I acted as Honorary Secretary for a visiting pack) of seven years, and I can say with affection and gratitude that, during all that time, of all the hundreds of small farmers (and big ones too) over whose lands the Hunt went, knocking gaps in fences, riding, sometimes, it is to be feared, where it should not have ridden, not a man of them failed in helpfulness and friendship. And this is no small thing to be able to say of a poor country, where but few of the farmers could afford to hunt, and where little fields can look very sorry for themselves after a couple of dozen of horses have galloped over them.

Even though the responsibilities of so small and unimportant a hunt were comparatively light, I expect they differ only in degree from those of the great ones, not in character. I will not try to explain wherein lie the charms of the office, but I may say that the habit of having hounds is a hard one to break, and that for myself, I know that its chief seduction lay in the Kennels. In the field, I am by no means certain that the care-free follower has not a better time than the Master. A blank day is no more than a personal disappointment to him. He does not, as does the Master, feel in the small of his back the massed and concentrated indignation of the Field when the stopping has been inadequate, or the fox has run a bad line, or there is no scent, or no fox, or the weather has broken, or, in short, any Act of God or the King's enemies, for which an M.F.H. is held responsible. And the care-free follower not only escapes condemnation, but even acquires merit, for what—as I have reason to know—is, in the Master, the sin that knows not forgiveness, namely, the crownéd crime of getting away with hounds and a fox, while the

Field, deaf to horn and holloa, remain in the background, immersed in agreeable conversation. (But this, from the point of view of the sinner, is a sin that knows not repentance.)

The boundaries of a hunting country are not infrequently a contentious matter, but in West Carbery we have no trespassers, neither do we trespass. The Atlantic Ocean half-circles us on the south and west, and is a boundary that admits of no dispute; on the east there is a margin of thirty miles or so between us and any rivals, and northward we might run up the coast to Donegal without poaching, unless, indeed, on our way through Kerry, we fell foul of one of those trencher-fed packs of black beagles of which I propose to tell presently.

There is a saying, originated by a poor-hearted visitor, that has become a *cliché* in connection with West Carbery. Surveying the hills from the roads, he said that, if he had to ride the country, which God forbid, the mount he would require would be a weight-carrying goat.

I will allow that there have been times when such an ideal has had its allurement for me, but few things are more surprising than the quickness and cleverness with which a good Irish horse will learn how to deal with an unfamiliar and difficult country. I had a very well-bred brown mare, named Kitty, who came from the County Wexford; she was a charming mare, very active, with a perfect mouth and manners, and her first method of negotiating the descent of a steep and rocky Carbery hillside was to take it in "standin' leps." But in less than a season she had learned when to crawl, or to slide, or to stand still and look for a better place. I have ridden her with confidence up and down steps in

Cononagh Wood that are roughly hewn out of rock, and pose alternately as a staircase and a waterfall; and she has never given me any but a legitimate fall, and a horse must fall sometimes (even as it was said, defiantly, by one convicted in a gross misstatement, "Sure a person *must* tell a lie sometimes!" And a misstatement and a miscalculation come to very much the same thing).

Apropos of the going I may tell of a rather singular experience that once was mine. We were hunting on the hills, after a time of very wet weather, when a fox jumped up under our feet. The hounds took him at a great pace along the rough ridge of the hill, and then swung seawards, right down its wet, steep, southern side. Crowley, who was then my huntsman, and I were close to them, and the Field were hard—very hard—on our heels. We followed the hounds over the edge of the hill. It was steep enough to make the drops off the fences seem pretty heavy, but not too steep. Soon, however, we came to a slope as sheer as was possible for horses to attempt, and Crowley and I, in the lead, had hardly gone more than a horse's length downwards when we felt the boggy fleece of soaking sedge and heather beginning to slide under us. Our horses, two good grey mares, Bridget and Rayleen, instinctively crouched, and almost sat down, with their forelegs straight in front of them, while, like a mat that is moved along a slippery floor, the face of the hill, some twenty yards wide, slid downwards, bearing us on its surface. After a few palpitating moments, we arrived at a level place, and our progress was arrested. I looked back, and there I saw the side of the hill, a sheet of wet, shining rock, that we had scalped as bare as the skull of an Indian warrior's victim. I also

saw the Field, hurrying right and left in search of an alternative way of descent.

Crowley, like all huntsmen, rejoiced at their thwarting.

"'Tis no harm at all for them to be delayed awhile!" was his view of the case, as alone we sped after the hounds.

I feel sure that no conscientious Master of a subscription pack would have agreed with him. I made no reply, but I felt that the affair had its bright side.

Note.—For an account, written by Martin Ross, of a typical West Carbery Holiday Hunting-day, see Appendix, No. 1.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOUND OF THE HORN

MY old Hunting diaries are quite without literary merit, but I am, nevertheless, grateful to them for the spurs that they are now driving into my memory, waking in it recollection of incidents that, but for these dull yet conscientious records, would long since have gone to ground, like most of the foxes they tell about; and, unlike them, would have stayed there. That day, for example, when I find the sport curtly, yet sufficingly summarised:

> . . . "Mixed bag. Killed a fox, a rabbit, a goat, and a woodcock. The latter buzzed into Crowley's face out of a furze bush, and he hit it down with the horn."

And without my Hunting diaries I might not have remembered many things that I now find interesting. That good hunt out of Liss Ard, during my second term of office, when Mike Hurley was my huntsman. . . .

"An hour and a quarter. Killed at Oldcourt. Three men, in succession, came up to Mike and said 'Where did ye find him?' Mike said, 'Liss Ard.' Each, in succession, replied, 'Glory be to God!' and retired, silent, in awed meditation."

Or that day of enjoyable anxiety when it is written . . . "Metherell ill. I carried the horn until the first fence, when it flew like a bird into

a bush. Luckily near home, so left it there as hounds were running hard. Had quite a nice 25 minutes. Hounds patronising but indulgent, and worked kindly for me" . . . "Drew the hills. Wind indescribably hateful. It tore my hat off on the top of Bludth, and for 40 minutes hard going wore it under my arm (like S. Denis)." . . . "Crowley gave Rayleen a bad cut. Doctor J—— lent him his mare, and asked him to be

NEAR KNOCKDRUM.

careful with her, C—— said, 'I'll do my best, Doctor, but when hounds are running I can't put her legs in me pocket!'" . . . "Jumped a wall back of a farmhouse near Knockdrum, and Bridget landed with one hind fetlock *in* the broken end of a whisky bottle. Made Crowley examine it and asked him what was wrong. C—— said, with usual optimism, 'Sure the foot's dropping off her, Miss!' Led her home, very lame. Her foot didn't drop off, but she won't be out again for some time." . . . "Drew Laherdán blank. Painful fact sufficiently explained by information that 'Danny's uncle's wife was buryin' this morning.' Danny, having of course been at the

wake all night, postponed stopping earths till he saw us coming, and so stopped foxes in. He subsequently assured me there was one fox in the wood that was 'jet-black,' and another 'the size of a horse.'"

I recognize the grave unconventionality, if not worse, of writing of Hunting without alluding to the question of Scent—the Mystery of Scent is, I think, the standard phrase—and I will therefore offer an instance—amplifying a little the meagre details given by my diary—that seems to me to be suitably incomprehensible.

We were hunting in the hills. It was a bright and sunny day, with a light and vanishing touch of frost. The hounds were drawing along the southern side of a high hill, covered with short rough grass and heather, with furze brakes here and there among the rocks. We had not found, but the hounds were very busy, feathering, and obviously sure that a fox had been about. But we could not find him. Then one of the Field rode up to me and said, with the icy calm that so often masks the fullness of pride:

"There's your fox, Master!"

He pointed with his whip to something that looked like a rusty can, lying under a furze bush.

A fox! Not, as I first feared, dead, but very much the reverse, as I found when I cracked my whip at him. He slid away over the hill, crossing, after half a dozen yards or so, a wide blackened patch where furze had been burnt. In an instant we brought the hounds to the place where he had lain. They said nothing. They were interested, and thought it was worth looking into, but no more than that. We took them on,

and crossed the burnt patch, and suddenly, on its farther verge, they all put down their heads and went away with a shout, and we had a brilliant forty minutes, till he beat us on the edge of the sea, getting into a slit in the cliffs (whence an obliging fisherman offered to extract him with a boat-hook; but the offer was declined).

Why should the fox's bed have been less fragrant than his light feet, and why could not hounds acknowledge him until he had crossed the burnt bit of hill? These things are a mystery.

* * * * *

Thus my Hunting diaries, which offer but seldom anything more than severe geographical details, or Stables and Kennels hospital news.

Yet each entry is to me like a lamp in a dark room, and lights up forgotten spaces of memory. Sometimes I wonder if I shall burn them all—throw down the lamps, and let darkness cover the fun that is over, and gross darkness the people, the friendly people, who have gone too. . . . Well, before I make that holocaust, I will tell of an incident, which I still find to be quite unaccountable, but in which I neither demand nor expect belief, merely affirming that the facts are accurately stated, and advising sensible persons that no pretentiously rational and superior explanations will be accepted, by me, at all events.

It was in the third year of my Mastership. We had met at Lough Ine, on a wet and stormy November day, just such a day as Martin Ross and I described in a story called "Put down One and carry Two,"* and Lonen Hill in that story

* *In Mr. Knox's Country.*

is Lough Ine Hill in this true history. Lough Ine, with its jewel of a blue-green sea-lake, and its tremendous hill, is one of the loveliest places in this country. The dark hill stoops over the lake as though it were trying to see its reflection there; lesser hills run from about its feet to the sea. Its great contours are muffled on two sides in dense wood, but to the west and north they are flagrantly themselves, sheathed with bare rock, plumed here and there with furze and heather. To force a fox out of the big hill is at no time easy, least of all on such a day of tempest as found us there, and tempest thickened with sea fog into the bargain. One throws hounds into that covert with fatalistic calm, and with but the one certainty that on whichever side of the hill one awaits results, it will be the wrong side.

On this occasion operations began, speedily, and unexpectedly, with a ring of twenty-five minutes, which Tim Crowley and I had to ourselves, because the Field had gathered in a place of shelter on the lee side of the hill, while the fox broke up wind, and ran away in the teeth of the storm into Spain. This, however, is not as far off as might be supposed, being a wild bit of coast that is called Spain because there some ships of the Armada were lost (though not all their crews, if one may judge from the swarthy, ink-haired occupants of at least one cottage, who, parenthetically I may say, headed our fox). From Spain, the fox ran back into the hill, and the hounds were immediately swallowed up in the wood. Crowley (who was then my huntsman), Johnny, the Whipper-in, and I, being unable to follow them, addressed ourselves to the dread task of climbing the hill above and beyond the wood, and the higher we climbed,

A MAN OF "SPAIN"

the thicker the mist, and the wilder the wind. (A combination of forces peculiar, I believe, to West Carbery.) The Field, in their sanctuary, were as though they had never been. I dismissed them from my mind, having a sterner task in hand.

Crowley, blowing sad blasts on his horn, proceeded along the outside of the wood; Johnny and I distributed ourselves as widely as possible about the hill, in hope of meeting the hounds, who might, not improbably, push their fox up and out of the wood, and over the crown of the hill, to which very discomfortable altitude we had at length attained. (To extort the sympathy of hunting-women I will say that my hat was like a ship straining at two cables, one under my hair, the other beneath my chin, with a hat-guard in reserve. They held; but hardly.)

Presently, faintly, through the wind, roaring in my ears, I heard a "Tally-Ho!" I steered for it as best I could, and met the two men converging in the same direction. Each of us had thought that one of the others had given the holloa; all of us disclaimed responsibility for it. No further sound came. Bewildered, we separated again.

Nothing more lonely can be imagined than straying, in the isolation of impenetrable mist, in those desolate solitudes. Wind, that was able, as Crowley said, to blow the horns off a cow, strove tirelessly to tear me out of the saddle; rain came slashing through the mist; my good mare, Lady Meath, toiled on, going neither she nor I knew whither; scrambling up rocky mounds, plunging through breast-high furze bushes, or dragging herself out of the bogs that filled every space between the other atrocities.

She and I were both glad when something alive came, shadowly, through the white gloom, and we were joined by Johnny on Moses. And, even as he came into the close circle of vision, he and I both heard the horn, dimly, yet distinctly.

"Tim's got them, Master!" says Johnny, rejoicing.

We rode our best for the sound, only to meet Crowley, hurrying towards the same point, shouting an enquiry as to whether we had heard a horn.

"It must be Mr. Aylmer is away with them!" he said, "I couldn't get sight nor sound o' them. . . ."

(He had been my brother's Whip, and Aylmer carried a horn and often gave him a helping hand.)

Twice we three heard that horn, and saw nothing, and heard no more. And when we got down the hill on its farther side, the hounds were still in the wood, and I met Aylmer, and he had not touched his horn.

I daresay that it is superfluous to say that each hearer of our story offered a perfectly futile explanation to account for what we had heard, and that all such were indignantly rejected by the hearers.

My own belief was that we had been in temporary touch with one of the dead Masters of the old West Carberies, whose home had been on the shore of Lough Ine Lake, and that he was having the same difficulty as we in getting his hounds out of covert. However, this I kept to myself.

CHAPTER XVII

"THE SWEET CRY OF HOUNDS"

THE self-denying ordinance, already referred to, that Martin Ross and I decreed to ourselves every now and then, never again to write of hunting, has seldom been observed for long, and, in common perhaps with some of the readers of this book, I begin to fear that the resolve was too high for us. Having admitted this, further apology or repentance may be spared, and bethinking me of a day whose incidents were of a sort unlikely to occur in other Hunts—say those of Meath, or Leicestershire—I will offer some of them for comparison.

This day was in January, 1915. The hounds met at Drishane, and, January though it was, summer herself could not have bettered the blue of the sky. It was during the time of the War, and we had a soldier or two, home on leave, and Christmas schoolboys and girls were out in strength. The home foxes, like the soldier-boys, were off duty and on leave, and we drew the orchard in vain, and the shrubberies, and the little wood behind the stable-yard, the watch-tower whence He (thus is the reigning fox ever spoken of) launched his forays; even into the flower garden, under the windows, a hound or two bustled, in conscientious resolve to leave no place unsearched.

In my bedroom window sat the three little

white ladies, Candy, Sheila, and Dooley, watching the hounds with wintry faces, and hearts full of unappeasable hatred, barking monotonously and persistently, as long as so much as one hound's presence was suspected. I have never been able to soften the hearts of the house-dogs on this subject. It has been a serious disappointment to me. The hereditary hatred of hounds culminated in Dooley, gentlest yet most implacable—as is often the way with gentle people—of all the long succession of white ladies. Each hound-puppy, or brace of hound-puppies, that I walked, was regarded by her with the same unremitting suspicion. She is gone now, so I shall not hurt her feelings by saying that her methods were those of the professional assassin, save that she never assassinated.

The hound-puppy in residence, with large, foolish frolickings, would career along road or field, and in his track, a few yards astern, following his slightest twist and turn, Dooley would glide, ears laid back, little tail at half-cock, ready for the moment when it would be necessary for her, in my defence, to spring upon the ruffian puppy, and tear him limb from limb.

From Drishane, and its immediate precincts, the hounds progressed to Fyle Dick and Knock Drum, and still no fox was found. So we rode on to the west, in the delicious, sparkling morning, along the hills over the sea, drawing for a fox as we went, and selecting a route that provided as many jumps as satisfied even the schoolboys, and hardly two leps o' them alike, which made them all the better fun. Our point was a glen that runs back into the country above a lonely harbour, whose protecting headland is almost the first land-fall for the American liners.

"He resorts here mostly," said a dweller on the lip of the glen. "It's often I'll see him taking a patheroll for himself around my house. If he's not in it, it's in the big hill above he is——"

So, as he wasn't in it, we went on to the big hill, Knock-na-Gowr, the Hill of the Goat; and I remember that its summit was not reached without a fair share of casualties. Between us, Metherell, the Huntsman, and Mike Hurley (then Whipper-in), and I, we caught five horses, with —to put it delicately—temporarily unoccupied saddles, and I had an anxious, if fleeting, thought of what might happen if hounds began to run. From the top of the hill a view such as is not often bestowed upon fox-hunters was ours. On three sides was the sea, a rough-dinted sheet of dazzling silver; to northward stretched the wide country, pale green and yellow in the sunlight, with, for horizon, the rolling line of the Castle Donovan mountains, crested by the jagged, sapphire spikes of the Reeks of Kerry.

We were trailing along the bare plateau that is the highest part of Knock-na-Gowr, when the hounds began to work. They had up to this done little more than stray listlessly round and about the immediate line of march, but now they put down their heads, and spread, and clustered, with scurrying, whimpering rushes, hustling one another at suspected furze bushes, nosing meticulously the brown bracken stems, gradually collecting and assorting evidence. Then from two country boys, who had climbed the hill with us, and were collaborating with the hounds, came a wild and sudden outcry.

"Look-at-he! Look-at-he! Look-at-he!" and in the same instant a burst of most tuneable yells from their collaborators told that they also

had arrived at a verdict. Before we had so much as time to pick up our reins, the whole pack was pelting down the north side of Knock-na-Gowr, at the very brush of a tall hill-fox, with black legs as long as a collie's, and a brilliant orange coat. After that I don't know what happened to the schoolboys or girls either. I believe they all reached home alive. What was happening to the fox was the only thing that mattered, and was less easily determined. We followed him down a place whose steepness was comparable only to the side of a house—or the sides of two houses—and how the horses stood up, and got us safe down to the pasture-land at its foot, is known to no one (unless to the country boys, who see and know everything). Somehow the thing was done. Liss Ard Lake, of that royal blue that bog water becomes in honour of a royal day, lay away to our right, with the foxes' sure stronghold, the Liss Ard woods, turning red-purple now at the thought of spring, behind it. And, as well as the menace of the woods, there were those yellow reed-beds, that run round the lake like a gold fringe round a flag, and had often enough given a fox a shelter; it was not a moment for thinking about schoolboys or schoolgirls.

But that fox proved good. He turned his back on the reed-beds and the woods, and gave us twenty flying minutes on reasonably good grass before he led us away into Lick Hill. Then the luck changed. Up in the higher places of Lick we ran into a sea-mist, thick and white, and the hounds were swallowed up in it, and well as some of us knew Lick, and what have been described as its "hookes and pookes," it is difficult, from the centre of a circle, twenty yards

wide, of rock, sedge, and heather, to deduce the points of the compass. There followed the game that is called Magic Music, when one who is blindfolded is directed to his goal by the rising and falling of a tune. So it was for us, labouring, and leathering, and lathering in the blind-folding mist; galloping best pace along the rocky hillside, in what direction we knew not, with no guide save the faint and flying music. Sometimes the whiteness would thin away and leave a wider view, and sight would join with sound. Once I remember, a transient and lovely vision was vouchsafed of a green space of hillside, with the hounds flitting over it, while Metherell's and Mike's red coats, and the two chestnuts they were riding, little Fidget, and big Marquis, made a vivid splash of colour, with the misty, silvered side of the hill for background.

The fox's point was a matter known only to himself. He had at least three possible alternatives, Liss Ard, Laherdán, and Lough Ine—let me be forgiven these seemingly superfluous details; any fox-hunter will know how dear and indispensable they are—and when, at last, we were sure he was for Lough Ine, we knew that two deep and terrible ravines lay across our path. There was no evading them, but no weight-carrying goat could have excelled the skill with which the horses crept and slid into their depths, and climbed and strained up and out of them, and we hurried on, sometimes by cattle-tracks, that are like nothing so much as prostrate stepladders, made of mud; or by goat passages, which are only comparable to that way of a serpent on a rock that baffled King Solomon, and found ourselves clattering and splashing in what felt like a watercourse, but was, when the

weather was favourable, a *bohireen*, led always through the mist by that spirit music, and suddenly, we were out of the white smother, and off the hill, and in sunshine, going hard over good grass fields, with the huge mass of Lough Ine Hill towering over us, and the hounds not too far ahead.

But instead of holding on west, down to the sea-lake under the Hill, and up into the main earth under "The Soldier's Rock" in the wood, this light-minded fox, for no apparent reason, changed his course, and ran full south for the cliffs and the sea. He took us over a hump-backed promontory, grass-covered and stone-walled, and the ground rose gradually till we found ourselves on a high, furzy place, looking down a very steep furzy hill, to where, far below, the hounds were racing over the slender neck of gravel that joins Bullock Island to the main-land. He was a cliff fox and he had come back to the sea.

And such a wondrous sea as he had led us to! Blue as the seas of Sicily, with a foam-edging, as it were of swansdown, round all the innumerable coves and cliffs and outposts of rock; with headland after headland, all bathed in sun, leading one's eyes out to the wide ocean. And there, a couple of miles out, did we behold a fellow-hunter, a British ship of war having a hunt of her own! Her quarry, like ours, was not inclined to wait, but she had methods at her disposal that are denied to fox-hunters. A white puff of smoke, something that flipped in white leaps over the azure sea, and her fox surrendered at discretion.

Not so ours. We saw the hounds dash across the strand that faced us, and swing away to the

A WEST CARBERY HUNTSMAN

right over the rocks that encircle the island. We pushed on, shoving and shuffling down the narrow zigzag path between the thick furze bushes, and on across the neck of gravel. Bullock Island is a high mound of a few grassy acres, that lie, like a green cushion, on the top of a tower of grey rock. We reached the top of the cushion by means of what my memory tells me was a spiral (and quite unprotected) staircase, cut out of the cliff (though my reason dissents). The hounds raged below us, out of sight, along the sea-line. Our fox had been joined by two comrades, who had been sitting, like cormorants, on the rocks. All round the island, on hill-tops and promontories, country people stood and watched events. I know not how often the chase went round the island, hounds and foxes alike inaccessible and entirely engrossed in each other. One of the foxes was killed somewhere under one of the cliffs; so the eagle-eyed and screech-owl-voiced watchers on the mainland proclaimed. We, high on our cushion, a hundred feet, or more, above them, saw nothing. When at last we got the hounds together, the tide had risen, and the connecting-link of gravel was under water. Another five minutes, and we should all have been marooned till the next tide.

We splashed across as fast as we could, each horse's knees showering sparkles over the next in line ahead; Mike, on big Marquis, made the crossing three times, ferrying over the lads who had joined us on the island. It was as much as Metherell on little Fidget could do to keep his boots out of water. The hounds swam all round him; one thought of Venus and her dolphins (though Metherell was quite unlike Venus).

Red coats reflected brokenly in the glittering

sea, green hills, blue sky, white sea-birds wheeling low, screaming at the invaders, trampling, splashing horses, shouting boys, and the keen scent of the sea, and the sun-lighted air that went to one's head like champagne—all these I remember.

Such good times we used to have in West Carbery. . . .

CHAPTER XVIII

"UNRULY REYNARD"

FOX-HUNTING, with all the joys and advantages that it brings with it to many members of the community, has, of necessity, one official victim, whose trials are only known to himself.

And this unfortunate person, self-immolated on the twin altars of Sport and Duty, is he or she who has undertaken the office of Manager of the Fund to compensate those whose poultry have been destroyed by foxes.

I am well aware that the average and ignorant humanitarian will contend that the victims in this connection are, if not the fowl themselves, then those whose substance has become a portion for foxes. But I have had experience in these matters. The foxes have pillaged my poultry-yard, and I have been the collector and dispenser of the West Carbery Fowl Fund for as many years as I was Master, and I speak of that I know.

There were two reasons that made my acceptance of this additional effort compulsory. The first may suffice; no one else would undertake the thorny job. But there was a second, almost equally cogent; the claimants were entirely determined to place their demands with the person whom they looked upon as being at the back of the whole bad business. "Qui

facit per alium" etc. etc., expressed their views. It was no good for "The Captain of the Dogs" —thus I have been entitled—to pretend that she did not view with approval the nourishing of her foxes by forced subvention, and it was believed that her necessarily bad conscience would countermine the assured hardness of her heart.

I must not be ungrateful, nor omit to acknowledge the help that I received from various intermediaries, and notably from the kind old priest of a neighbouring parish, whose knowledge and authority were of inestimable value. But there are certain life-troubles wherein external help is unavailing. Sea-sickness for example. I have heard a too-true story of a faithful wife who implored the captain of a steamer to tell her what she could do for her suffering husband. The Captain replied:

"You leave it to 'im, Mum, and when the time comes, 'e'll do it for 'imself!"

So it was with the distribution of the F.F. I had to do it for myself.

In this part of Ireland—I do not know how it may be elsewhere—the fowl are the exclusive property of the women of the family, who feed them and tend them, and regard such profits as there may result, as strictly their own.

"He has all swept," wrote one complainant, "and it is to me little hins I looks to put winter clothes on me."

(An attention that, it is perhaps unnecessary to say, is alluded to in a metaphorical sense.)

For this reason, no doubt, it was that I ever found the Man of the House easier to deal with than Herself, or, as many of the country men of this district speak of their wives, "My Mistress" (which is possibly one of the many

Elizabethanisms that are met with in what Martin Ross and I have written of as "The Anglo-Irish language").*

"I heard from your wife, Shanahan," I say, "complaining the fox to me——"

"Ah, what harm'd a hen do an old woman!" interrupts Shanahan, meaning not so much the personal violence of a hen, as its loss. He goes on to say, sympathetically, that it was all the poor fellow took was an old goose, and she as thin as a rope. "'Twas for his young ones he took her. It'd delight ye to see them tumbling and play-acting for themselves with herself and an old hen they had above on the cliff outside their nest!"

The Mesdames Shanahan are, however, very different propositions from their lords. I have been cornered out hunting and obliged to listen to a prolonged exposure of the villainy of "The Fox"—always spoken of in the masculine and singular, as one says "The Devil."

"Look at what he have done to me!" shrieked an old woman one day, waylaying me in a narrow passage whence escape was impossible. "All me rotten little hins gone from me! Nine o' thim he car't! He have me beggared altogether!"

That she called her hens "rotten" was a subtle *nuance* implying her own entire destitution. The complaint could scarcely be heard in consequence of the noise made by a red cur dog, who ceased not from denunciations of the hounds, darting in and out of his mistress's cabin, like a mechanical toy, as hound after hound trotted past the door; emerging in a torrent of barking as each passed on, only to fly, squealing, to safety, as another appeared. The hair on his red back

* *Stray-aways.*

was like incandescent wire. I suggested that he was "cross enough" to keep away the fox.

"Ah, he's very sevare that way with strangers," said his owner, "but he'd be in dread of the fox. Sure it'd be as good for me to get him dhrownded, when he's not able to defind me little hins for me!"

Her wrongs seemed genuine, and the case a

MRS. CONNOLLY'S.

legitimate one; the F.F. came into action. The solatium was snatched at, also my hand, by means of which Mrs. Connolly did her best to drag me from my saddle.

"If I could reach ye, I'd kiss ye!" she declared. But as the mare I was riding was sixteen hands, and Mrs. Connolly stood but little over twelve, the threat could not take effect.

It was when letters had to be dealt with that the F.F. took on its most arduous form. To reply, temporisingly, to each application; to

institute enquiries as to how far it might be ascribed to fact or fancy ; finally, to send the sum assessed by the investigator, and to do so—in most cases—in shattering uncertainty as to whether one were acting with callous brutality or with imbecile credulity. . . . These are miseries known only to the F.F. officials of Irish Hunts. (I say "Irish," because I understand that in England everyone speaks the truth, and there is always plenty of money in the war-chest, but even with these advantages, I project an impulse of sympathy towards all Fowl Fund Treasurers.)

There was just one amelioration to my lot in connection with this duty, and this was the supreme quality of some of the many letters that I received. Impossible as it was to withhold sympathy—even though miserably convinced I was being made a fool of—it was equally impossible not to enjoy, as literature, and as orthography such a letter as the following. Even the address on the envelope was stirring. It began with the stamp, high in the left-hand corner, and continued thus :

Miss Sommerville
Castle Thousand
Commander of
Hounds.
In haste.

And this is the letter, transcribed with conscientious exactness as written (saving only the addition, for the sake of elucidation, of some few marks of punctuation, a detail entirely lacking in the originals, and also the substitution of other names for people and places).

"Dear Honarable Miss Sommerville,
i am ahamed to trouble you about

foxes again, before the last hunt ye had they had hurt me very much but i was a shamed to be writing to you i thought i may hav seene you but i was disappointed, but since then they have made a grate rade on my fowell. in the early part of the evening they comes near the house and devoures them. i am surprised that ye did not see any of them, and that same evening they tuck two of my ducks away, and including the hole business i conseder the loss is more than two pounds and not to allow more than half the value of the fowell as you know how deere fowle or now but i dont want to be unreasonalle but i hope you will be gratefull enough to compenisate for them i remoine

Your trully Mrs. John Hegarty."

It is endorsed on the letter that I sent Mrs. Hegarty £1 15s. This, no doubt, encouraged her, a few months later, to another effort. Not the least of the charm of her spelling lies in its capriciousness; the variations of treatment that disdain her own precedents, the dash that carries her safely—or nearly so—over such a fence as "unreasonable," yet fails her at the very heart of her subject, and brings her down so inevitably, yet so variously, over her fowl.

It is possible that our conventional adherence to rules of spelling robs our letters of much charm and poignancy, but, no doubt, if variations were deliberate they would cease to please.

Let me offer another of Mrs. John Hegarty's artless despatches in proof of this contention.

"My dear Miss Somerville i feele very much displeased at having to trouble you again about your foxes, i am so much anoyed from the loss

of my fowel that i do not searcly know what i can say. Sience yere last hunt the foxes have no less than three pounds worth of fowelle taken, a lot of young hins and ducks, and i cannot put a prise on them, eggs or so deer now and turkeys cart such a long prise when the young birds would be fit for sail. . . . and there or foxes in the wood as fast as there or treese there; they comes out about the land a mile and more and takes fowel and young lambs with them, so my dear Miss Somervill i hope you will excuse me for saying so much and i hope you will be gratefull enough to send me some fair compensation for my loss i remain yours trully Mrs John Hegarty."

With some of my correspondents the address presented especial difficulty. The following for example:

"Miss Sumerville Mrs. F.
Hounds.
Drishane House."

—seems to indicate that the letters M.F.H. were in the writer's mind; "Mrs." being, presumably, the feminine of "Master." An earth-stopper, from what he himself described as "a backwards place, north entirely of the big bog of Lisheen-apingina," seemed to be under the impression that my first Christian name was a species of title, probably foreign, as "Pasha," or "Rajah," and addressed his envelope with classic simplicity to "Edith Œ. Sumerville M.F.H."

adding nothing further save a stamp. Heading each page of the letter the same was writ

large, like a proclamation, and the document ends thus :

> " I and my little boy will work for you as usual with many thanks yours truly
>
> Mr. James Cahalane."

One of my under-studies in the distribution of the Fowl Fund addresses me as " Miss Eith," and warns me " not to pay certain parties as I came to learn sence that some of those fowl dide with dises and some more were destroyed by dogs." He adds that he " canot pay untill he sees further."

Rats, badgers, stoats, dogs, dises (need I say " diseases " ?) all disasters are laid at the door of him who one of my correspondents calls, and not without reason, " The most trubblesome of little animalls." Another says pathetically that her foul were her only hobbie and her means of sustinence for the year. An old widow " rights to inform Miss Sumervil that Unruly Reynard is every day visiting her and her fowel are her only means of pulling out an existence." Another begs, in perfect spelling, to inform me that she is sorely annoyed from all the foxes who have 14 hens killed and eaten on her, and three elegant ducks.

Mrs. Bridget O'Driscoll says gallantly that although the fox (who has, she says, his den and nest in the cave-hill near her) has rendered her foul exacly useles, she would not like to poision him " as no sport would give her more pleasur than to see a good chasse after him Which pleasur I hopes ye will afford me and oblidge a troublesom friend Bridget O'Driscoll."

Sometimes letters of invitation would come, begging that I would

"—kindly oblige and benefit the people of this locality by send out your foxhounds to hunt the foxes which are returned again to their old haunt in Capponaboha. The foul had ease since the last hunt and it is too soon they are back again to thin them. Please come up next Tuesday morning about 5 o'clock. I met one this morning cooking a fine goose for his breakfast. I will be in the look out for the sound of the bugle. By so doing you will confer on us a great complement."

The "complement" was conferred, though, the month being October, and the "old haunt" fifteen miles away, not at precisely the heroic hour suggested.

Another writer declares that "the place is filled in with foxes," and yet another letter, omitting all allocation, date, or address, opens, like a short story with the remark:

"I met the Fox in Dereeny on Sunday. I met him in Dereeny also again on Monday and I met him on Wenesday and there is another one in Munnig and if ye care about coming ye can meet at Tubber Cross as the place is quite convuing to it

Sent by Michael Leary.

That was with ye the last day ye wore up in the hunt."

From Tubber Cross also a further request, couched in the scholarly language that becomes a schoolmaster, assures me that "the youngsters of the neighbourhood are enthusiastic about the hunt, and two of them are adepts at the locating of foxes, and even badgers, so I am to ask them to stop the holes. The two young Sports live in this townland."

I accepted in the most courtly terms I could muster, and if anyone cares to know what sort of a day we had, is it not written in "A Foxhunt in the Southern Hills?"* Therefore it cannot be retold here, much as I should enjoy doing so.

I turn over the untidy masses of these old letters with very different feelings from those with which I opened them. Now, they strike me as showing the most admirable restraint in dealing with acute and legitimate grievances. As for example the sorrows of Mrs. Salter. She had a distributing station for well-bred poultry, held under the ægis of the Local Government Board, and she wrote to tell me that the foxes "Had her fairly robed." She goes on to say, "And now they have cart my Government Gander and a Lady of your Understanding and Intelligence knows what that mean to the like of me," and I had to pay for this official considerably more than I believe him, or any of his fellows in Government employment, to have been worth.

I have grumbled bitterly and unavailingly over the effort, mental and physical, that the F.F. entailed upon me, yet I cannot deny that, after all, this dealing directly with the people had its compensating pleasantness. It mattered not how furiously they might write, their good manners did not fail them in a personal interview. I have fulfilled many duties less pleasant than riding quietly round the coverts with Martin, when the horses were not long in off grass, and the evenings were long and warm; or doing "road-work" with the hounds, starting at 3.30 a.m. on a pale July morning, before the flies were awake, and visiting Patsey Dawley,

* *Stray-aways.*

and Andy Walsh, and many another; getting all the gossip about the foxes from them, and staunching, as far as was humanly possible, the wounds inflicted on their "Mistresses" by Unruly Reynard.

That kind old Priest of whom I have spoken was, like many of his cloth, a good sportsman, and a friend of the Hunt no less than of his people. His assessments of claims were unquestioningly accepted by both sides, and I may admit that his letters to me were valuable astringents for a heart softened by such an appeal as this:

"Dear Miss, just a few lines to let you know the fox is making a great set on me I am beggard with him he have 8 hens and 2 ducks carried and i badly in want of them

Excuse me for making so stiff

I remain yours truly Mrs. Cotter."

Or this:

"I thought I had the house fastened well but he scrope under the door and got in you would be surprised to see where he did get in and every wet night always we finds his foot marks around the fowl-house we found them in the fields around partly eaten and wasn't it a terrible loss to any poor woman after rearing her fowl all the winter all young brown leg horns to have he be so clever for her. . . ." and then a pathetic P.S.

"When ye will come the way here after, we will do all in our power for ye to help ye to catch him. . . ." (the dots are the petitioner's and may be meant to suggest tears. Certainly not kisses).

I have sent such a heart-cry—many of them indeed—to Father Tim, and he has replied, very temperately, as was his wont:

> "I fear these good people have all got the Idea of asking considerably more than would cover the actual damage to them, but on the principle that they will receive less, and unless they ask they will not receive. . . .
>
> P.S. I feel exceedingly that these good people should be so rude in their composition."

This last stricture referred to the repeated threats of "these good people" to "lay poision before the foxes" (as a sort of oblation), but I think these were not uttered with intention.

I cannot forbear to add a few extracts from another letter from that Madame de Sévigné *manquée*, Mrs. John Hegarty, only regretting that an unavoidable monotony of theme restrains me from publishing a volume of her correspondence with me.

> "Dear Miss Somerville i beg your honour's pardion for not writing to you long ago to let you know that i got your cheque. I feele very thankfull to you but i would much rather have the foul for they would lay more than that and i could ha^{c}th them and that very night i got your letter and the morning after they tuck four or five more of prise foule frome me they came in the field next to the foul house 3 of them and sweep them and see what a loss that is and eggs 2–6 a dozen and a grand hin cock that i bought for breeding which cost me a half a crown and i could not value the loss of them not to mind what they tuck away last summer. I kept the dog inside for fere he

might injure or frighten them and if i left the dog loose he would frighten them. i would have written long before now but owing to a very soar fingure i had and could not catch my pen with my fingure i hope you will write as soon as you get this letter it is so scribbled that i am afraid you cannot read it i humbly ask forgiveness and pardion of your honour for my neglect and hope you will write again about your foxes and let me know when you will hunt again. i have not now after the year in my foul house but 10 hens, and i hope you will be good enough to compensate me as far as your honer consedder it fair i don't realy know how much fowel that they have taken from me with twelve months. sense they began to rare their young their so ravonous that only for the house dog they would attact myself eye will say no more for this time i hope to get an answer very soone i remaine

yours Truely, Mrs. John Hegarty."

CHAPTER XIX

EAVESDROPS

THE impulse to keep a diary is one that is not easy to analyse. Like other usurping habits that become inveterate, it begins insidiously, almost imperceptibly. One has, perhaps, been given a seductive volume, with creamy spaces and red headlines, as a birthday present, when one has had the luck to become eighteen or twenty-one. The recipient does not know that in accepting it he is preparing for himself thraldom, and is laying a lifelong burden on either himself or his conscience. An abandoned diary presupposes an abandoned diarist.

Nor is the inveteracy of diaries their only drawback. The deeper one progresses into life, the more complicated and abstruse are the decisions as to what to include or omit. And, setting aside the difficult question of discretion, a cursory glance at the earlier years of my own record is sufficient to undermine my self-esteem, and also to assure me that facetiousness is the stumbling-block of the young, and that no point is less fixed than the point of humour.

There was a youth of my acquaintance, whose feelings poured, effortlessly, through the end of his pen, and whose diary became the mirror of his soul. He fell in love, and nightly committed to his diary what one of my cousins—whose

spelling, like Mrs. John Hegarty's, was capricious —has called "rapsadodies." . . . They were married, and lived happily, until the subject of the rapsadodies discovered that the ingenuous diarist was accustomed to leave the diary, at large, on his table.

"No one," protested the rhapsodist, "would be so dishonourable as to read a diary!"

Yet who is there who has succeeded in keeping inviolable the casket to which he has confided his ecstasies and his despairs? The day of forgetfulness comes when the casket is left unshielded, and the diarist knows a new despair, while the ecstasies are transferred to the bosom of the housemaid. For myself, I acquired, to some extent, the diary habit at an early age, and have never quite succeeded in shaking it off. It has been hampering, but I acknowledge a certain indebtedness. I cannot deny that I have been a little shaken by such an entry as "Tried to invent plausible incidents for this wretched diary, that has been neglected for months"; yet in among the litter of rubbish, and the trivialities of every day, I have come upon things long forgotten, that now to read of give me pleasure, even though they are trivial—so far as anything that happens is trivial—but so are the toys that are found in the graves of long-forgotten Greek, or Roman, or Egyptian children, trivial things, broken and imperfect, many of them, once precious only to a few, for their mingled memories of laughter and tears, now promoted to honour, and a place on the shelves of museums.

* * * * *

Martin Ross and I, though, as I have hinted, very indifferent diarists, had one good habit

among many bad ones, and that was a habit of persistent eavesdropping and of recording its spoils. It is one of Ireland's charms that the agreeability of her people is not at all disconcerted by publicity. The tactful eavesdropper may, as likely as not, be easily accepted as one of the party, gathered in by a gay and roving eye. Even if direct invitation be not extended, there is no hushing of voices, no closing in of the circle. There is something imperial about this indifference. The outsider is not of sufficient account to the talkers to embarrass them. It is a fine gesture, and exonerates the entranced eavesdropper. The game has but one drawback. The moment of revelation is generally so brief, like the glimpses from a train into the unsuspecting back rooms of suburban houses, or the incidents that the travelling beam of a searchlight will suddenly reveal.

As, for example, the single sentence overheard by my cousin, as an emigrant train slowly steamed away from a platform crowded with weeping friends.

But not all were weeping.

"I had the greatest fun ever ye seen!" a young man declared, rejoicingly, to his comrades; "I was lettin' on that I was goin' to Ameriky meself, and didn't I knock three kisses off o' Jamesy Kennedy!"

Sometimes, however, more is given, and the drops from the eaves fall thick and fast. Martin was in a tea-shop in a small town in—not to be too explicit—let me say Connaught. At the marble-topped table next to that at which she established herself, were two female friends, middle-aged, rather severe of aspect, handsomely dressed, difficult, judging by appearance, to

place as to class, but endowed with that rich sonority of brogue that would make a speech on bimetalism enjoyable. Martin's memory served her well, and I doubt not but that little was lost to her. This was what she heard and recorded.

The First Lady (with air of philosophical detachment):

"I often think th' idea of tea is better than the reality!"

The Second Lady (ponders this; is obviously impressed, thoughtfully stirs teapot, probably ascribing philosophy to shortcomings of tea. Then replies, dandling her teaspoon):

"Ah-well-now, tea's very nice!"

(Pause. Number One remains silent, Number Two resumes, with stimulating brightness):

"And so ye didn't go to the wedding?"

"I HAD THE GREATEST FUN EVER YE SEEN!"

Number One (with retrospective hauteur):

"No indeed I did not! I met Annie Richardson going. She was dressed in Navy. Not at all suitable for her, *I* thought! A nice black dolman and bonnet would be the thing for her!" (She laughs bitterly.) "But sure she thought herself grand! 'I see you're dressed out too!' says she to me.

That showed me she took trouble with herself. But I thought it was nassty of her to say it!"

(Number Two assents eagerly. One sees that Annie Richardson gives herself airs. Both ladies, relapsing into silence, gobble jam roll. Then Number Two says, pleasantly):

"Well, and how's Willy?"

Number One (with sympathy, yet with enjoyment of theme):

"Ah, poor Willy's in jail. He got in trouble. Just took some money out of the Bank he was clerk in. Ah, he was always unfortunate——"

(Compassionate silence. Number One resumes),

"And look at Mr. Brown! *He* got a butcher in Dublin to cash a cheque for him, and of course there was no money to meet it! And that wasn't all, but when he got married, in Westland Row Chapel, he agreed to give the priest three pounds, and when he gave the roll of notes to the priest what was it only paper! And of course the priest was too polite to look into it—only put it straight in his pawket—and away with me brave bridegroom out of the country!"

(The ladies laugh with grim enjoyment. Having eaten the last crumbs of a large plate of cakes, they prepare to depart. Number Two finishes her third cup of tea, and says, with a sigh):

"Ah, these cups remind me of me own nice set; the ones I pawned, ye remember"; (She rises, and surveys the eavesdropper, as it were subconsciously, then turns again to her companion), "I declare the clerk that wrote the ticket was laughing at me, I was la-menting them so much——!"

On this they passed. The searchlight was extinguished. Of such is the stuff of Romance;

a serial story, never to be concluded. When I think of Mr. Brown, and know that never will his further ingenious career be revealed to me, I could almost wish that Martin had never heard of him.

Valuable as can be the gleanings of tea-shops and their like, it is in railway carriages that "the common dust of servile opportunity most often turns to gold." During the War the wave of prosperity lifted the farmers' wives and daughters from their wonted moorings, and in rich apparel, beaming with self-satisfaction, they took fortune at the flood, and patronised Bazaars, Agricultural Shows, Races, and any other entertainment that offered, regardless of distance and the cost of travelling. Thus it was that, during the third year of the War, to me, a humble and lonely traveller, was vouchsafed a half-hour of rich enjoyment. I was bound for Rosslare, and into my empty carriage there surged a splendid company, consisting of two elderly ladies, two young ones, and one gentleman. They were going to Races at Waterford, and were in the smart clothes and high spirits proper to the occasion. The gentleman, with a waxed red moustache, checked breeches, and glittering gaiters, was obviously a dandy, and it was soon apparent that he was also a wag. In response to an enquiry from one of the young ladies as to his plans for the day's pleasuring, he replied archly, and with an ardent glance at the questioner:

"Ah! I'll be looking out for me *single* friends to spend the day with!"

The young lady, with an equal archness, turned to one of the chaperon-matrons and said:

"D'ye hear that what Mr. Hartigan says, Mrs. Reilly? He's tired of the married ones already!"

"Ah, me married life's not very long, but it's very brisk!" said Mr. Hartigan, cheerfully.

"It's a pity yourself and herself didn't come to the dance we had at the Young Men's Christian last week," said the young lady. "That was brisk enough I can tell ye!"

"Oh, ye're all great girls up there, Miss Nora!" said Mr. Hartigan, "sure the world knows that!"

"Well, we try to pass the time!" acknowledged Miss Nora, casting an eye full of high jinks at her colleague young lady.

"Ah, Time's too short!" said Mr. Hartigan, "If *you* were married to me, now, I might have time enough!"

Of this somewhat ambiguous speech no notice was taken. The two young ladies fell into long whispered converse, of which, unhappily, only Miss Nora's concluding sentence was audible to me:

"—— and O, Eily! I was *speech*less with indignation!"

"That was a pity!" ventured Mr. Hartigan.

"If you don't mind yourself maybe I'll be speechless to-day too!" retorted Miss Nora.

"Ah, don't be too hard on him," said Mrs. Reilly jovially.

The other matron, who filled abundantly the corner seat by the closed window, sat in smiling silence, simmering in the sun. She was encased in a skin-tight brown velvet blouse, and I think she knew that an unguarded laugh might send its buttons flying like bullets. A sneeze would have been fatal, but the atmosphere of the carriage precluded any danger of a chill. A tunnel occurred, and when the roar and rattle had ceased, I found that the conversation had turned to the subject of Leap Year.

"Don't ye know," Mr. Hartigan was saying, "that all the privileges this year rests with the Ladies?"

"Ah, the min holds them so tight we can't get them from them!" said Miss Nora with a toss of her head.

"To be sure the Ladies should dominate!" said Mr. Hartigan, with the obsequious gallantry that becomes a conqueror, "I was getting very uneasy when we came to the tunnel awhile ago!"

"How frightful ye were!" mocked Miss Nora, "wasn't it well for ye that ye weren't in the middle of us then!"

"Oh, oh!" said Mrs. Reilly, with assumed reproof, to the sprightly Miss Nora, "why wouldn't ye have some compassion for poor Mr. Hartigan? And I wouldn't wonder at all if Mrs. Hartigan's not always at him too!"

To this perfidious sympathy, Mr. Hartigan responded with a squeal of tenor laughter that was like the neigh of a colt. Miss Eily, whose demeanour had been throughout less frivolous than that of her friend, here said sharply:

"Well *I* have no wan to think of but meself, thank God!"

"I was going to say 'The Lord keep ye so!' but I won't," said Mr. Hartigan, with a rather biting humour, "Maybe His assistance isn't necessary!"

Miss Eily's grey eyes flashed fire, but unfortunately, before she could respond to the thrust, a station intervened, and another gentleman, but little less gorgeous than Mr. Hartigan, joined the party. He was evidently a great friend. All the ladies beamed upon him, and Mrs. Reilly complimented him largely on his appearance.

"Well now, Mrs. Reilly, I tell ye that me avver de poise isn't what it should be at all!" said the new gentleman. "Ah, if I had a wife now, to fatten me up!"

He looked tenderly at Miss Eily, who, still ruffled, replied without sympathy:

"And what good would a wife do ye?"

The new gentleman put his head on one side, and said yearningly, "Why then I wisht I had one! I've a great turn for matrimony."

"Little *I* think of it!" broke in Miss Nora.

"Well, with the War now, ye might be hard set to get a husband," the gentleman suggested, smilingly, and I thought I intercepted a wink travelling to his fellow-male; "Without ye'd fancy a Wounded Hero! What do *you* say, Miss Eily?"

"I wouldn't like to see a husband limping in to me!" said Miss Eily coldly.

"Well, but wouldn't it be a good thing for him to have only the one leg to kick ye with?" suggested Mr. Hartigan, returning the other gentleman's wink.

The jest had an enraptured reception. Even the lady in brown velvet trusted her buttons to the extent of a brief and noiseless laugh.

"Ha!" said Miss Eily tramplingly, "Ye're very smart now, but if Conscription comes the two of ye'll soon be away in France!"

It was a swift and shrewd thrust. Mr. Hartigan, something staggered, metaphorically put up his hands, and said, whether in sarcasm or propitiation I could not determine, "Ah, ye're a great girl altogether!"

"It's a pity ye didn't find that out before!" said Miss Nora, charging to the aid of her comrade.

The new gentleman turned to Mrs. Reilly for the help that few matrons refuse to young men.

"Look at the way the young ladies treats me!" he complained, "and me that's after losin' a fine heifer only yesterday!"

"Oh my, what happened her?" asked Mrs. Reilly, with instant interest.

"'Twas a swelling she got in her throat. Soft like, it was. She couldn't swallow at all with it."

"Well, and what did ye do with her?"

It was easy to see that Mrs. Reilly had become spokeswoman for the party; even the young ladies' jests and coquetries were forgotten. These were all people of the land, and when the true gods come into the fighting line the half gods go.

"Well," said the new gentleman, "I sent for me brother, Pat, that's a vet, but he couldn't come. . . ."

"Oh, pity!" murmured Mrs. Reilly swiftly.

". . . I took a small hayfork then, and I made it red hot, and I gave her the prongs in the throat. . . ."

"Ah, the creature!" said Mrs. Reilly, catching her breath.

". . . It eased her," went on the new gentleman sombrely, "but, after all, she died on me."

"Fie!" said Mrs. Reilly (or, to be accurate, she said "Foy!"). It was her ultimate expression of indignant sympathy. The sympathy with the owner of the heifer, the indignation with Providence.

The notebook in which, unseen, I had made such entries as would stimulate and revive memory, here fails, and I suppose that we then came to Waterford.

* * * * *

Few qualities have been more harangued about and pontificated upon than the sense of humour, and no definition can please everyone, since, like the dazzle of the sun on the sea, its flashpoint shifts with the point of view. To every class, as to every nation, its own jokes. Ireland once had the power not only to amuse other people, but also to laugh at herself; but the experience of recent years seems to suggest that the first gift alone remains. Here and there, in the Ireland that does not assert itself to be politically young, there are still some to make jokes, and others to laugh at them. A man having authority came upon one of his workmen clearing a water-course, with two others standing by.

"Well, boys," he said, "this is what we always see in Ireland! One man working, and two more looking on!"

"There's three o' them now, Sir!" said one of the lookers-on politely.

And the old people can still laugh at themselves —which, is perhaps, the touchstone of humour. Especially the old women, who regard the world, and its needs and follies, as from another plane, having never had time for follies, and having outlived all needs, save a pinch o' tea, and a pair-een o' boots. I cannot forget little old Mrs. Leary, who, dying, said gaily:

"Sure three inches of a coffin'll do *me!* 'Look,' I says to them, 'make the coffin a small sign too big, the way the people'll think the womaneen inside in it wasn't all out so little as what she was!'"

And the two old "Nurses" at Ross, one of whom was acting as butler and housemaid, and the other as cook and yard-boy, and each,

conscious of her own absurdity, would describe herself and her confederate as :

"Me an' th' other owld hairo!"

There was a time at Ross when, as has been told elsewhere, Martin Ross was wrestling with circumstances, all intractable, and none more so than a collection of old women, miserably poor, living for the most part on the charity of neighbours but little less poor than they. My cousin, somehow put together a small sum of money with which to help them a little, and they were accustomed to assemble, on an established day, in the squalid ante-chamber of what was then the Post Office, there to receive the weekly dole. I was present on one of these occasions. Martin Ross arrived, and stood, regarding her pensioners, inevitably amused at her own attitude of Earthly Providence to beings contemporary with her great-grandmother; a little staggered by their numbers, which, it need scarcely be said, appreciated weekly. The beings were crouched on the floor, round the walls of the empty room, shapeless bundles of rags, unrecognisable as human, were it not for the watchful, wary old faces that poked out from beneath shawls, and petticoats that served as shawls, even as the heads of tortoises poke out from their hoods of shell.

One of them cocked her head sideways, and surveyed Martin with attentive, shrewd eyes, noting, I am sure, the young pureness of her skin, the slender erectness of her figure; unaware, I am equally sure, of the intellectual refinement that made her face memorable, yet, perhaps, dimly conscious of the crisp immaculateness of her aspect, and entirely perceptive of the sympathy and humour in her look. A feeling of the incongruity of such as she and her fellows

depending on this young, slim creature, must have risen in her. Her sense of humour responded to Martin's, as flame will run to flame. She uttered a screech of laughter:

"Ah-ha! Ye have yer gang!" said she.

"YE HAVE YER GANG!"

CHAPTER XX

OF AN UNCLE

IT is unfortunate that neither to me nor to Martin Ross have befallen any of those adventures of drama that make the fortune of such books as this is. I have certainly been shipwrecked, but Major Yeates, R.M. has used up that story in the *House of Fahy*, and has indeed made his own of various reasonably thrilling events that might otherwise have dignified these pages. As a matter of fact, the most salient incidents in our lives have been our books, and they must speak for themselves.

Personal adventures failing, there remains one tried and proved feature of all well-equipped autobiographies, which has been summarized in the noble title of a once well-known book—*Monarchs I have Met.* But while I will not discredit my friends, and myself, by denying their distinction, I think it is as well to leave them to the biographers of the future.

Yet I have had friends by whose loss, even though Dictionaries of National Biography may not comment on them, the world has become a poorer place for many besides myself. I do not presume to think that I can do more than give some suggestion, in two or three notable cases, of what they were to us, and how much they stood for; but, if only for the pleasure of honouring this book with their names, I will try and write

something of them, and can but entreat their friends to forgive my shortcomings, and to remember that though the spirit is willing, the power to give it utterance is weak.

* * * * *

Uncles are not invariably the friends of their nieces and nephews. History, and Fairy Tales, the two best instructors in human affairs, concur in assuming them to be mutually hostile. But it cannot be denied that there have been unconventional uncles who were neither murderous nor self-seeking, and among these, it is not too much to say, were my mother's two brothers, Joscelyn and Kendal Coghill. It must not be supposed that this somewhat negative summary does more than clear the ground for definite statement. This niece of theirs, who would now offer a pious tribute (pious, I hasten to say, in the conventional sense only) to avuncular memory, feels her inadequacy, and only rushes in because no angel has hitherto shown any intention of treading in the path.

There is something inveterately elderly in the title of Uncle, and I shall therefore omit it, because up to the last day of Kendal Coghill's eighty-seven years on this side of the Border, age, and, still less, elderly-ness, had no dominion over him. He was born on August 19, 1832. He and my mother had a bare year between them, and were, with a younger sister, Sylvia, the three last of a long family. Their father was Admiral Sir Josiah Coghill, Bart.; their mother, Anna Maria Bushe, daughter of Chief Justice Bushe, a famous man in his day, and not yet forgotten in Ireland. The Admiral was one of Nelson's Captains, and was a distinguished

member of that great company. He was given the Gold Medal for his services at the Battle of the Nile, and he also acquired fame on account of the remarkable strength of his lungs.

"Have you met Coghill lately?" asked one Captain Courageous of another.

"No, but I heard him in the Mediterranean the other day," said the other.

A cousin of my mother's, Martin's aunt, Miss Fox (whose singular pet name was "Pie") used to tell of the Admiral's dramatic reading of the Bible, and of how she, being the victim of a sense of humour, had to roll herself in the dining-room window curtains, to conceal her laughter as best she might, while the Admiral thundered the dialogue between Joseph and his brethren.

"YE BE SPIES!" roared Joseph.

And the Brethren, in an attenuated squeak, replied:

"We are true men! Thy servants are no spies!"

On which, I believe Pie Fox's agonies pulled down the window curtain, and the Admiral, in the voice of Joseph, interpolated the command:

"PIE FOX, LEAVE THE ROOM!"

into the Biblical narrative.

Undoubtedly in readers-aloud of the Bible, a sense of humour is useful, but listeners are more often happier without it.

My grandmother Coghill, being one of the leading ladies of the literary set of the Cheltenham society of her time, had little leisure to spare for her nine children; considering, I dare say, and very justly, that in bringing them into the world she had more than played her part in domestic life. Be that as it may, my mother used to tell of how the youngest ones, herself, and Kendal, and Sylvia, were left to the unchecked

ferocities of a nurse, Augusta, who would seem to have been nothing less than a fully qualified ogress of the straitest sect known to Jack the Giant-killer. She starved the children, and ate their food herself, or gave it to her satellites. When my poor little mother, aged six, found and devoured a piece of cake, excusing herself with the protest that she was hungry, Augusta, having first beaten her, made two placards on

"LIAR AND THIEF!"

one of which she wrote LIAR, and on the other THIEF, and compelled her victim to wear these labels, back and front, when she went for her daily walk in the town. I cannot help wishing that my grandmother, with some of her literary friends, had met that unfortunate little sandwich-man.

The Ogress kept an armoury of sticks and canes, all thick, some thicker, with which to beat her charges, and, according to my mother, availed herself of her opportunities as nurse to select the moment when the beating would most nearly strike home. It is here that Kendal first comes

into history, He made a hole in the wall of the staircase, and pushed the sticks into unknown depths, never to return. He then fought Augusta to a finish and defeated her, bringing about such a disclosure of her methods that she was driven forth, to the place of ogresses, I suppose, and the deliverer himself, having won freedom for his sisters, and proved himself a man of mettle, was forthwith sent to school.

This was in 1841, when he was nine years old, and, I imagine, that it was at about this time that one of the many escapes of his charmed life occurred. He went sliding on a frozen and deep pond in a quarry; the ice at the centre gave way, he went through, and was no more seen. At this juncture his brother Joscelyn, six years older than himself, arrived, quite by chance, as I have always heard, and was told by excited but (in the literal sense) unmoved bystanders that there was a boy at the bottom of the pond. Without further enquiry Joscelyn went down through the hole in the ice, found the boy, found—which was, possibly, less easy—the hole, and bringing his prize to the light, found also that he had saved his brother.

In the meantime one of the sympathising onlookers had rushed to the Admiral's house and left word that both his sons were drowned.

Kendal was the first boy on the roll of the first term of Cheltenham College. There he entered in earnest on his career as a fighter, and, as he had no objection to admitting, did better with his fists than with his brains, excellent though the latter were. I should like to recount here a story that he told of one of his schoolfellows, and I cannot do better than quote his own account of the incident, which he gives in

some brief memoirs that he was induced by my sister to write, a few years before his death in 1919. It happened in the thick of the Mutiny, when he and his regiment were fighting on "The Ridge" before Delhi. He and an Engineer officer were standing side by side in a newly made battery, when a shrapnel came through an embrasure and

> "carried off the officer's left arm, all but an inch of flesh by which it hung as he fell to the ground. I whipped off his puggree and with it, and a couple of flat stones, made a tourniquet round the upper part of his arm. Then I hoisted him on my back, and scrambled on all fours, or how I could, up the hill, and by a miracle we were neither hit in crossing the Ridge. . . .
>
> "Some days later, I turned into the Engineers' hospital, and asked if any of them had lost an arm lately, as, when I bound up a wounded officer, I cut his arm off with my penknife and threw it away. Passing a cot I heard myself called, and found my friend, who feebly thanked me. As I was leaving he asked my name. 'Coghill,' said I, '2nd Bengal Fusiliers.' 'Is it Kendal Coghill?' said he. 'Yes,' said I, 'but who are you that know my name?' 'Warrend,' said he. 'What, Edmund Warrend?' 'Yes.' 'By Jove!' said I, 'this is strange! The last time we met was ten years ago at Cheltenham College, and I swore to myself that if ever I met you in after life, I would have your blood, for bullying me and making me your fag! And by Jove!' (looking at my stained uniform) 'I have more of it now than I bargained for!'"

To read these Memoirs, and, still more, the letters to his family, written in hot blood in the scant breathing spaces of that awful time, is to be forced to realize horrors that might have been expected to crush the joy of life out of the gayest heart. And in truth, in his earliest letters it would seem that the gaiety of even the gay and fearless heart of "Paddy" Coghill at five-and-twenty, had been quenched. In the first of these, dated May 20, 1857, after recounting some few of the ghastly atrocities to women—English ladies, many of them his friends—unrepeatable here, he says, speaking of himself and his Regiment:

> "We have solemnly sworn the most dire vengeance and murder, and after our swords were sharpened, we wrote the name of some particular friend who had been massacred, on the blade, and swore that none of us would stop killing till the names of our friends were entirely obliterated in blood."

They kept that oath. Letter after letter tells how sternly. By the time Delhi was taken Kendal Coghill had been in thirty different fights, and, as he says in one letter:

> "this is a war of extermination, none of the enemy spare our wounded, and our men won't spare them."

In a letter written to one of his sisters, dated July 11, 1857, he tells that he had been in hospital

> "on the sick list since the 5th with cholera, but all pains had left, and I was nearly well again, thank God, by the 9th. On the 9th the alarm sounded at 7 a.m., thinking it was a common fight I laid in bed till the alarm and

double sounded. In a moment I was out of bed and had my horse saddled" (he was the Adjutant) "and overtook my Regiment just as I saw them fire a volley into what I took to be our own Irregular Cavalry."

They were, however, Mutineers, trying to rush the camp. They were routed, and the young Adjutant says that

"as it was raining awfully I went home and to bed again. Everything sounded as quiet as peace, and I wondered when the regiment would come home out of the rain. At 5 p.m. I got up, and went to our advanced picquets and heard round the hill an awful row, and galloping round a corner found myself in as pretty a bayonet and butt-end row as one could wish. However, I wasn't there more than ten minutes when a rush came down the hill of reinforcements for us . . . and drove the enemy back . . . and they dispersed to Delhi. They must have lost about 2000. Altogether on that hill we had only 620 men fighting, and the enemy must have been some seven or eight thousand strong, so we gave them a mauling which they have not forgotten."

He goes on to say that he saw :

"about as ugly a sight as could be wished ; over 1000 of the enemy, dead and wounded, and 223 (as I found afterwards) of ours, lying weltering in blood on the ground, and the rain pouring in torrents made the mess hideous."

Two months of incessant fighting followed before he wrote a letter to his brother, headed

"Delhi ! ! ! Hurrah ! 22nd Sept., 1857."

The story of the taking of Delhi has been told often before, and from many and various points of view, but Kendal Coghill's account of that tremendous and triumphant forlorn hope, may without apology be added to that Cairn of Remembrance, and shall be transcribed here.

"At midnight of the 13th Sept. I was sent for to form up the Regiment and tell them off into three parties; one to carry the escalading ladders, one for support, and the 3rd as reserve. We were to do the work in the dark of the morning of the 14th. We moved off at 3 a.m. and lay on our bellies behind a low wall close under the city, so that the grape passed over us, but the muskets told. It seemed as if we should never hear the signal, which was an explosion of blowing up the Cashmere Gate. At a quarter to six we heard the noise, and started off with a cheer, as it was too light for a surprise, and nothing but a determined rush could save us. Two Engineer officers and five sergeants carried bags of powder up to the very gate and fastened them there under a fire I have never seen equalled. Four of the sergeants were killed and the two officers dangerously wounded (both losing limbs), before the work was done, and then our advance was ordered directly our guns stopped fire. The walls were lined by the enemy in shoals, who kept up an incessant fire, and brought up light guns on platforms on the breach. If we had once failed we should have lost all: I don't think there is a staunch native soldier with us, with the exception of 600 Ghoorkas; and all the Sikhs fought merely for loot, and that, between the two,

they disliked the Sepoys a little more than they did us, and I know that the King's party" (The King of Hindoostan) "were offering them all sorts of bribes. Our English force was so reduced by cholera, fever, and sickness that we could not throw more than 2000 British soldiers into the city, and these were obliged to lead the storm as no natives would do so. We had to storm a small breach and do the rest by escalade, the best way we could, at the word 'Charge.' If every man felt as I did, they felt nothing. A species of wildness or madness came over me, knowing that the quicker the rush, the nearer the enemy, the earlier the revenge. I took a firm bite of a pistol bullet in my mouth (which was there to keep the mouth moist) and with a devil's yell I rushed from under cover. The musketry and jingalls poured in like rain, and men kept falling on every side of me, but I thought my life was charmed and that they could not touch me. The curses, groans, and execrations of the wounded and dying, cursing their fate at being left outside and not being able to revenge themselves, were pitiable in the extreme . . . we were to have stormed the left, but the fire on the right was so heavy that all the ladder party there were shot down, and the supports would have fallen back, so we left the left and rushed to the right. After that I felt like a drunken man. I just remember putting my sword back and seizing the ladders and throwing them down into the ditch. The ladders were only eight feet and the ditch we found twenty feet deep. In the excitement we dropped below, and the ladders reached the 'berm' on the other side and up we rushed.

The Brutes fought till we regularly cut and hacked our way through them with sword and bayonet. Unfortunately the first thing my sword stuck in was the body of a Colour Sergeant of mine, just alongside of me on the next ladder, who was shot and fell on my sword, but the next moment it was shivering through a Pandy, and then another. All order and formation was over and we cut and hacked wherever we could. I never thought of drawing my pistol, put poked, thrust, and hacked till my arm was tired.

By this time we had established a firm footing inside the Quadrangle, and sent out a skirmishing party of 200 to avoid a near approach and allow a formation. We formed in column, and went round the walls to the right. We took, with our columns*—75th Queens, 2nd Fusiliers, and 4th Sikhs—gate after gate and barricade, and house after house, the natives defending every place, inch by inch, till we reached the 5th Gate, viz. the Cabul Gate. It was a tough fight there, and they had numbers and guns against our few remaining men with muskets, but, as our orders were peremptory to take and hold it, there was no help. It was then that I found we wanted most pluck, the men and officers fatigued to death, and the excitement over for the time, our orders being to hold the post to the last. At each Gateway and Bastion we had left a detachment, so that at the Cabul we had only about 200 men. These we divided into three parties, of 50, 50, 100. The two fifties lined the tops of the highest houses down

* *He says elsewhere that there were seven miles of fortified walls, with embrasures and loopholes all round.*

the street, and the rest remained at the gateway. The enemy regularly mobbed us with about 3000 men, and two light guns attacked our front. If we had made a charge they would have taken us in flank and retaken the gate, so we had to lie down flat and let their guns fire over us till they came near, and then our bayonets always told. The work continued from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m., and we were being picked off from a distance, without hope of retaliation, or assistance coming to us, and we did not know what was going on on the left, or rear, as we were the advanced right. At 4 p.m. in came two guns to help us, and we charged down the street, planted our guns, and in ten minutes cleared them away, capturing one gun of theirs.

Night came on, and we had had nothing to eat or drink all day, and were awfully done. My sole consolation, a soda-water bottle of weak brandy and water, hanging to my side, had been shot through, and the liquid wasted. We were under arms all night, dodging with supports to left, right, and front, as they attacked us all through the dark, but being rank cowards they did not like chawing up 200 Europeans. The next morning we were reinforced, but told to keep our own, so we threw up sandbag breastworks, and there we lay till the 20th, only losing two or three men a day. At midnight on the 20th we started on with Sappers, and cut our way through houses till we came within twenty yards of their strongest and best built bastion. At daybreak we went at them with a cheer, and surprised them, and killed about 200 inside. All outside bolted, and we turned the guns on them. We left a party at

the Bastion, and charged after them while they had the fright on board, but they ran so fast it was only sniping.

Well, we got on a mile and a half from the Ajmeer Gate, the extremity. There we came on them in a crush, rushing out of the gateway. We made a bag of about 500 there, and the rest dropped over the walls, but I am happy to say our cavalry were near, and chopped up a lot of them. In the meantime our left had advanced and taken the Magazine and Palace, but everyone bolted before them and towards us, so we had all the fun. We brought some of their light guns out in the street, and our Infantry Officers loaded and fired up the street with grape into mobs of them till we could fire no longer, and I fear a lot of them escaped. The loss of our force, out of 5600 that stormed, was killed and wounded, 64 officers and 1383 men. . . . The enemy had about 25 or 30,000 actual Sepoys, and about 30,000 more 'Ghazies'—a race of devils and fanatics from close to this—all armed with muskets and swords, but once we established a fright in them, and got them to start, the game was over, and we must have killed about 13,000 of them, and I only wish it was more. It took from the 14th to the 20th to clear the place, and fighting all the time. So much for teaching blacks to fight! We have recaptured 225 guns, and all the Arsenal, and in fact, nearly everything they have to their names. When they bolted they made for 'down country,' where I suppose we shall have another heavy fight or two, but as our force up here is awfully knocked up, I hope they will send us supports and reliefs from below, as cholera, fever, and

an Indian summer don't improve a constitution. I had the satisfaction of receiving the 'King of Hindustan' over as a prisoner, and immediately placed him safe, with a double sentry over him. It was not a manly thing to do, but I couldn't help calling him a 'Soor,' and other opprobrious epithets, and asking him about our families. I would have shot him dead if he had only looked up, the brute, and I gave the sentries orders if he tried to stir to drop him. Capt. Hodson, and Lieut. MacDowell of my Regiment, attached native Sikh Cavalry, went in pursuit of the Princes, and overtook them about eight miles off. Hodson had only 100 men, and they had about 10,000, but thinking he was an advanced guard, they gave up their arms, the three Princes, the Band of Christian Drummers of 28th Native Infantry, and the English Sergeant-Major, Gordon, of 28th N. I., who formerly was an Artilleryman, and during the siege pointed the enemies' guns on us, calling himself Shaik Abdoolah, and dressing like a Sepoy. The Band were killed on the spot, but the three Princes were brought with the Sergeant-Major to an open spot, where the Princes had themselves commenced the violation and slaughter of our ladies. They were mercilessly killed and stripped, and lay flat on the open till the dogs and jackals walked off with them.* The Sergeant-Major is still in our guard, in irons, and is going to be blown away from a gun in presence of the Force.

Oct. 4th. Since writing the above I've been going all over the country as part of a flying column. . . . The marching is awful, as we

* *See Appendix No. II.*

march straight across country, where there are no roads, and we drop by surprise in the night on villages and towns that befriended the enemy, and kept them in supplies, and cut up our ladies and officers, when they were obliged to bolt at the first commencement of the outbreak. Our Cavalry surround the towns, and we walk in, turn the women and children out, sack the place and fire it. . . . There are a few villages and known men who have favoured us all along, and given us information, these are all spared. We are rapidly clearing the country up here. . . . I don't know how we are able to stand this climate, as we march on until about 12 noon every day, from 2 a.m., and our tents don't come up till 3 p.m., but still, with the exception of a few fevers, we are in capital health.

I want much to come to Ireland when this is all over if it's only to gratify my pride in showing my grand Delhian beard! It's only about three inches long, but a fine massive 'fell,' as I have not put a razor to my face since May 14th. Write and let me know the feelings of England when they heard of all the atrocities perpetrated, as well as what they say to 5000 odd men taking a citadel strongly armed, with 75,000 men behind its walls.* Although I say it as shouldn't (as the saying is) I think it is one of the pluckiest things ever done, and all the kudos to the general. I don't believe for

* *In an earlier letter he says "when we had Delhi we had made it as strong as it could be, and taught the brutes inside to fight, and if only they had the pluck of sparrows they could claw us up. Inside is the largest arsenal in India, and enough* 18 *and* 24 *lb. guns for placing round ten Delhis. But we can do for them yet, please God!"*

undaunted pluck that English soldiers have their equals. It's only on occasions of storming that you see their true and determined pluck. They rush on under the heaviest fire as if they were fox-hunting."

Regretfully, I leave these Mutiny letters—the last word of the last one that is preserved being a P.S.

"Orders just come. We are to march 30 miles to-night and fight in the morning—Pleasant!"

In a letter from his General, Major-General Showers, a special tribute is paid to

"First Lieut. and Adjt. Kendal Coghill's activity and cheerful bearing."

This, from all I have ever heard, is putting the case mildly. To have described "Paddy Coghill," one of the best-known men in India, as being "active and cheerful," would, I imagine, have seemed to his fellows a rather striking understatement. I can do no more than chronicle a very few of his exploits. He was the hero of the episode of "The Bagman's Pony"* He backed himself to run a race with a man on his back, and all Calcutta turned out to see the fun. His jockey was a friend as well known as himself (whose name, since he is still on this side of the Border, I withhold). The Colonel (I fall inevitably into the title by which he was best known. C.T. has always run to Colonels, but for the last twenty years there was only one that counted) was fond of telling how, on the day of the race, when all the world was waiting on the

* "*All on the Irish Shore.*"

Maidán, he found his rider awaiting him in the Clubhouse "in his birthday suit! Not a rag on him!" the Colonel would declare. "He said he wasn't going to ask his mount to carry an ounce of extra weight!" This consideration for his horse, thoughtful though it was, was felt to be excessive; the jockey was persuaded to dress the part, to some modified extent, and victory did not fail, in spite of the concession to convention.

Victory never seems to have failed to Kendal Coghill. He was riding a steeplechase, and a stirrup went at the first fence. It was a bending course, and the stirrupless leg that had to "howld its howlt," was rubbed raw by the time the winning-post was reached, but the Colonel passed it first. He and some friends, in India, going home after a dinner party, crossed a temple enclosure and were there attacked by a little sacred Brahminee bull. He caught it by the horns and held it while his friends ran past; then he wrenched its head sideways and ran after them. The next day the little bull was found with its neck broken. He has told me how, hunting in England, or Scotland, I forget which, he was riding "a mad pulling brute of a chestnut horse. I was going stride for stride with the huntsman. All I could do was to keep out of his way and wide of the hounds. We came to the devil of an ugly place, and the huntsman pulled off to a little wood on the right, and shouted to me, 'Don't go there, Sir! It's a cruel bad place!' My monkey was up, and I said to the horse, 'I'll teach you to run away with me, you devil! if I break your neck for it and my own too!' and I let the brute go at it a hundred miles an hour. He shot up into the air, and I thought

he was never coming down again. I saw a big black hedge under me, and rails, and ditches, and water, and a thundering heavy drop, but we landed right end up, and went on, hell for leather. I looked round to the right to see if my friend the huntsman was coming along, and saw several fellows standing still, and no huntsman. So I pulled my brute round and went back. There was the huntsman with his neck broken! Jumping a little stile out of the wood his horse had fallen——"

The Colonel believed—as he said in his letter—that he had a charmed life. He told me that the only wound he received in all his campaigns, Burma, India, Egypt, was given him in a Mutiny fight by a dead man. A mounted Sepoy rode at him with a lance. He shot the man dead, but the horse came on, and the faithful lance, though turned a little from its course, still tried to avenge its master, and pierced the arm of the enemy.

When I was young I was not allowed to read Ouida's books, and when I had outgrown prohibition, I was arrogant, and believed that I had also outgrown Ouida. I shall never know the truth in this matter, as although to say "one of Ouida's heroes," still defines a type, I think I shall continue to take the definition on trust. The reason these once famous books have now been mentioned is because I imagine that the Colonel must have conformed in many ways to their ideals. When I was a child he entirely represented mine. My first remembrance of him is singing at a concert. He had a high tenor voice, that rang like a Cavalry trumpet, and he sang a song that thrilled me—

"*Je suis soldat, sol-da-a-a-hat, du Roi!*"

Kendal Coghill
-/85-

—and my mother accompanied him with a dash and spirit equal to his. Reverence and adoration but feebly express the feelings with which I regarded them, from a chair in the front row, with my feet only just touching the ground.

In him the Trois Mousquetaires were reincarnated, rolled into one gay Hussar. The "Beau Sabreur" of romance never had a better exponent. His eyes, large, piercing, bright blue, blazed, full of magnetism and force, under his heavy brows. He had strong, well-cut features, and the perfectly perpendicular back to the head that is so often one of the hall-marks of the soldier; and he had a great golden moustache, that, when he laughed, revealed a tremendous set of strong, white teeth, and made one think of a Bengal tiger. He stood about 5 feet 10 inches, and had the most gallant bearing, as well as the strongest, best-knit, and most upright figure that can be imagined. Too strong and thick-set to look well on a horse, he sat down in the saddle, like a man of marble, but by sheer force of character he rode hard, and kept good horses, and won some big races. On his own legs, he was famous as a fast runner, and won at Aldershot the Army Gold Cup for the Officers' 100 yards. In 1865 he exchanged into the XIXth Hussars, and commanded the Regiment with conspicuous success during the Egyptian Campaign of 1882. No less a soldier than the future Earl of Ypres, then a hard-riding young Irishman, Captain John French, was his Adjutant, and the friendship that began in their soldiering days, ended only with the Colonel's death in July, 1919, when his former Adjutant, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, doing his old Chief the honour that he would most have appreciated, sent a party of soldiers from

Cork to carry him to his grave in Castle Townshend churchyard, and to fire a farewell volley, in friendship, over the head that had heard so many shots fired in anger, and had come unscathed through all.

* * * * *

The Colonel was one of the most delightful *raconteurs* in the world, with a memory of steel for names and events. I remember his telling me that at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir, matters had not, at first, been going well, "but then," he said, "I felt as if someone had got on to the box of a runaway coach, and picked up the reins, and pulled the whole show together! It was Garnet Wolseley. He had come down on a single engine into the fight, and had taken hold——"

With that Campaign, which gave the Colonel his C.B., his thirty-one years of soldiering ended. He bought a small place in Castle Townshend, adjoining that of his brother, and there he built himself a house, and a studio, and became a gardener, ignorant and ambitious, and a painter, of a school exclusively his own, and a Magistrate, so just, and so entirely fearless, that people would smile when they heard the Colonel had been on the Bench, and would say there was no fear but *he* made short work of the cases! And he was a Spiritualist, deeply read, and full of enthusiasm, having himself remarkable psychic power, which, after he had left the Army, he was able to develop in a way that had not been possible before. And, almost first among his many interests, he was a boat-sailer. He started a Sailing Club, of which he was, of course, President, and bought a perilous, graceful, speedy

little racing-yacht, and to this day no one can decide why the President and the "Remora" didn't drown themselves, or any of their fellow-competitors. It mattered not how hard the stormy wind might blow, the Colonel scorned what he considered to be the cowardice of luffing up to a squall, and "carried on," regardless of consequences; and his iron resolve never to give way on a point of sailing in a race, has sent his rivals limping home, with injuries far too technical to be recounted here, thankful only that he had not driven "Remora's" bowsprit down their throats. He took up bicycling, and being both violent and erratic, would dart, incalculably, sideways, at his travelling companion, and with loud roars of apology and dismay from the Colonel, both would subside in the ditch. He took up motoring at an age when most old gentlemen are taken up by bathchairs, and, sitting rigidly upright, with an unyielding grip of the wheel, he thundered through the country, full of kindly offers of "lifts" to people who, not daring to refuse, but fearing still more to accept, found safety only in a complicated course of deceit. Once, mistaking the accelerator for the brake, he charged at full speed into a group of nephews and dogs. The nephews escaped, but one dog—a large, unattractive black creature, detested by all save her owner—was slain, and another was injured. It was feared that this disaster might be taken to heart by the Colonel, might even shake his nerve—we decided to say nothing of it to him. But, when next I met him, he recounted the incident to me, complacently, even with pride, and, referring to his victim, said with the cheerfulness that his General had so long before commended:

"Dam' cur! Dam' cur! No harm to have one less in the place!"

* * * * *

I believe if any of his host of friends were asked which they considered were the salient points in Kendal Coghill's character, they would reply, unhesitatingly, courage and fidelity. But only those of them who have been in deep water know how instant, and sure, and trusty was the hand that was stretched out to help, and knew too that the courage that he had so often proved in action, did not fail when he was fighting for his friends.

It is, indeed, hard to say which was the warmer, the Colonel's heart, or what he liked to call his "Little Tem." One might rely on both with confidence; but the hot temper was temporary, and the generous heart stood fast. His amazing energy and vitality burned in all that he undertook. Though the golden moustache and the heavy eyebrows had gone white, the blue eyes were as bright and keen as ever, and neither sight nor hearing knew the blight of old age. The language of every day was too tame and hackneyed for his needs. If he sent an invitation to dinner the guest was asked "to gnaw an enemy," or to "expand a waistcoat." All girls were "sweet flowers," all males were "mere man-things."

In replying to my congratulations on his eightieth birthday he reproaches me for

> "the unkindness of reminding me of the fatal fact that I have closed my Octagonal Shutter. In this anniversary trick I always play the Ostrich game, and hide the fact from myself,

lest I should feel obliged to 'behave as sich' and become a lean and Slippered Pantaloon. In your youth and innocence, not as yet, but, I trust, in the far future, the experience may arrive to you. You will then appreciate the sneaking pleasure in this Ostrich game; but if, by some malign chance, my head comes up out of the sand, I am sure I shall hear the creaking of the hinges as the shutters close down! I shall, in a few days, have my revenge on 'Bobs'* who wrote to me as 'Old boy' for on the 30th inst." (August, 1912) "he overtakes me as an octogenarian. So far I feel that age gains, for there is no pleasure in the bread and milk of Youth to be compared with the Nuts and Port wine of maturity!" In a later letter, announcing his return from the Riviera, he begins:

"With a 'tummy' laden with husks, i.e. the legs of the centipedes called chickens abroad, I, as a Prodigal Son, hope to return to my fatherless abode. . . . I have picked up some wandering microbes of cold in the nose, but as I am taking Sibyl to a *matinée* to-morrow I will have my *revanche* by transferring it to some unwary neighbour, who will hate unknown society in a day or two. *À bientot*—and congratulate yourself that it is not to-day, when a hug would discolour your nose with a rheum!"

The Colonel never outgrew his nephews and nieces. Even though one feared him, one talked to him as man to man, and argued, and discussed as with an equal in age (though a superior in

* *Field-Marshal Lord Roberts was one of his lifelong friends.*

fighting weight). It was to him that a small great-nephew, aged six years, turned, in a moment of desperate stress. It was Leap-year, and Paddy Coghill the Second had received proposals, even demands, for his hand, from no less than five ladies. He was much agitated. On the 28th of February, toilfully he indicted refusals to all the aspirants, yet tactfully, and with a touching desire to soften the blow to each. To one, a widowed great-aunt, he said (anxiety shaking his spelling), he "feared she was a bit to old" for him; to another, a spinster of mature years, he said he "was sorry to disapount her, and he would like to have her for his wife, but he thought he was to young to marry." However, mistrusting the sufficiency of these repulses, he sought the Colonel, that tried and sympathetic bachelor, and, confident in his armoury of Indian weapons, arranged with him a Plan of Campaign. And well for Paddy that he did so! On the morning of the fateful 29th, four determined, would-be brides, including the Great-Aunt, were seen advancing upon the nursery, attired (I know not why) in Eastern guise, with bath-towel yashmaks, brandishing Malayan Krises! Bleached by terror, Paddy took to his little heels, and fled to his coadjutor.

"To Arms! Uncle Kendal! To Arms!" he cried.

The Allies each seized a tulwar and demonstrated at the studio window. They also, very prudently, locked the studio door.

The brides were foiled.

CHAPTER XXI

DIVERGENCES

AMONG the tracks that have been scored in my life there is a deep one that leads to Lismore. Not Lismore of the Highlands, but our own Irish Lismore. The little city—for the Cathedral of Saint Carthage has for many centuries given it a claim to such a distinction—is set on a hill over the Blackwater, that strong and noble river, that moves mightily down its wide valley,and lends something of its own distinction to the commonplace towns and villages that have planted themselves on its banks. The great Castle of Lismore, that came to the Dukes of Devonshire by marriage with a daughter of the House of Roger Boyle, First Earl of Cork, faces the Cathedral across a deep space of gardens and tall trees. Thus it has stood since King John's time, sovereign of the splendid valley, with only the grey old church on the opposite hill to rival its authority. There are not many little towns that can boast of such an inheritance as these.

To have seen and known a place as lovely as the Vale of the Blackwater is a possession that Time cannot touch. I shut my eyes, and am again down on the river-bank just below the bridge. The river's broad curves, suave, brimming, are full of the sky. I can see its tide sliding on, under the clouds that seem so tangibly

painted on it that one feels as if they must move with the water, past the little figures of the salmon-fishers, out in the mid-stream shallows at "Duveen's," and away round those gracious green curves, down to the distant sea at Youghal. Above the beautiful grey arch of the bridge the towered mass of the Castle is dark against the western sky. Its incredible suitability to the whole great landscape makes it seem like a place in a fairy story, where it is the fulfilment of the crowning wish that is made by the happy younger Son of the King (who, always in fairy tales, is the lucky one, as well as being a lad of taste). It stands high over the river, and the cliff on which it is built drops nearly sheer into the shadowed water, and is covered with thick-clustered yews and hollies, oaks and laurels. Facing its long, many-towered façade, beyond the water-meadows, are woods, spreading wide arms east and west above the river; and above the woods, incredible again, only believable in Fairyland landscape, is the ridge of the Galtee Mountains, with one high peak, which I have seen covered with snow when the Castle walls were still scarlet with autumn leaves, and its gardens purple and golden with autumn flowers. Those wooded hill-sides are seamed with deep and twisting glens, each with its little wild river racing down to the serene Blackwater. Up the Glen of the Unashad one can follow the river, by what is called "Mr. Currey's Walk," to Lady Louisa's Bridge, with steep tributary glens, full of rhododendrons, in May all glorious within as the King's daughter, opening on either hand as one goes, and each turn of the flying stream seems more lovely than the last. When, at last, one has mounted clear of the woods, one comes

into upland pasture, dotted with little black-faced sheep, and the fields merge imperceptibly into brown moorland, sweeping upwards, covering the soft breast of the mountain. And up there, there is a view—and an air that has the very breath of life in it. . . .

* * * * *

Of late years the thought of Lismore is wholly bound up with that of my cousins, Ethel (*née* Coghill) and Jim Penrose, and with the many, and long, and good times that I have spent there with them. Hunting times (with the United, over a country not to be beaten for sport anywhere, not even in Ireland) and painting times, and writing, and walking, and talking times. But now I am dealing with more ancient history, and having so far, in these devious chronicles, resisted the temptation of talking about those who still share with me the stress of life, I will not make things worse for them by public demonstrations of affection, or even of gratitude.

* * * * *

When I first went to Lismore it was in December, and I stayed with Fanny Currey. Her father, Mr. Francis Currey, had been, for what was, practically, all his long life, Agent and local representative of " The Duke " (who is the sun and centre of the life of Lismore), and when I first stayed there, it felt to me as though Fanny had " bought the fair and all that was there "—and I don't think that I was far wrong.

She has been dead for several years. She, and her faithful friend, Helen O'Hara, and Constance Bushe, and Martin's cousin, Rose Barton, and a few other brilliant women

painters, were the head and front of Water-colour Art in Ireland. But painting was very far from monopolising Fanny's energies. She was considerably older than I, and before I met her had, I imagine, passed through several successive phases of activity, and been paramount in all. Rider to hounds, salmon-fisher, woodcock-shooter, organist, suffrage speaker, agitator in all the main relations of life, in the dictionary sense of "one who rouses or stirs up"! In addition to these gifts I can answer for her having been a most effective fag-master in her later years; one who took the last ounce of work out of her slaves, but was so entirely competent, interesting, amusing, self-centred, and autocratic, that the slaves accepted their lot with hardly a thought of revolt. I was young then, and I felt, and was, honoured by her friendship.

I have tramped with her through the Duke's woods, rabbit shooting, carrying the bag and an old single-barrelled gun, lent to me by Fanny as a bribe to secure my docility, though she withheld the fact that never in its harmless career had it been known to take life. It certainly did not do so in my hands. We have gone painting together, down by the river, and I find in my diary that my part had been mainly to surround and drive swans into Fanny's foreground.

> "Frantic hunting of swans. Nearly strained my shoulder shying stones and clods to try and keep the brutes quiet for Fanny." And again, "The river rose, unknown to us, and made an island of our sketching-ground. Had to peel off my boots and stockings and carry F. across on my back. Nearly dropped her by reason of untimely laughter."

I can still feel the grip of her wiry knees, and the fierce kicks of her heels, and hear her shrieks of very just alarm and fury, when, in mid-stream, her Saint Christopher began to falter, and wobble, with incapacitating giggles. I could almost wish now that I had fallen down, her comments would so amply have repaid me for a wetting.

And yet another instance of her genius for utilizing the young may be offered, again culled from my diary.

> "Fanny couldn't sleep, so called me and made me read aloud to her a deadly political article out of *The XIXth Century*."

I remember it well. It was by Goldwin Smith, and was of so soporific a nature that as I droned it forth my own eyes were fain to close. Now and then, as a test, I would suppress Goldwin Smith, and reel off some rubbish of my own; whereon one of Fanny's flat green eyes would open.

"Damn you, Slummy! What are you at?" and Goldwin Smith was gloomily resumed.

There was something very attractive and impressive in her curious, plain face, full of intellect, and devilry, and good fellowship too; and no one that I have ever known had a more stimulating laugh, a cackle, that, when she had scored a point, was as triumphant and malicious as a magpie's. She was one of Mrs. Henry Fawcett's band of Suffrage speakers. I never had the luck to hear her speak in public, but I am quite sure that she was a trenchant and doughty "Rupert in debate." Would that she had lived to see the fall of the stubborn old walls of Jericho, outside of which she had blown such fierce blasts in her time!

She had the gift of putting through most things that she undertook. One of her many victories was gained over the District Councillors of Lismore, and is worthy of record.

During the later years of her life Fanny had abandoned all other interests in order to become a gardener, and, more especially, a professional bulb-grower. In this latter capacity she achieved the success that followed all her undertakings, selling her bulbs for sensational prices, evolving new varieties, and winning prizes wherever she exhibited her flowers. She took land outside Lismore and grew daffodils by the acre, but the choicest and most precious of her stock was kept under her own eye in the walled-in garden of her own house in the town.

It happened that, at the very topmost notch of Fanny's daffodil triumphs, a project was started in connection with the drainage of the town, and the Fathers of the City, whether from folly, or spite, probably a little of both, decided to run a drain through the centre of Fanny's walled-in garden, bringing destruction to her daffodil plots with their fifty-guinea bulbs, and causing general and quite unnecessary chaos. A notice was served on her, and she entered a protest, finally, a refusal to comply with the demands of the Council. All her objections were set aside. Fanny got out her gun, and, walking about her garden, ostentatiously shot rooks on the wing, before seating herself, still with her gun, on the top of her garden wall, having previously given forth to all concerned that she knew how to defend her property and was prepared to do so. The fight did not last long. The Fathers of the City, like those of Rome, in haste girded up their loins, but, unlike their

prototypes, hied them away from Fanny's wall, and victory was hers. Fanny had not, for long years, shown her quality in Lismore for nothing!

One of her stories was how she, herself unseen, viewed two little boys preparing to stone one of her dogs; but before she could intervene, one grasped the arm of the other, and hissed:

"Doän't t'ro de stoän! Doän't t'ro de stoän! Dat's Currey's daag!"

So useful it is to have "established a funk!"

My sister, Hildegarde, and I went to Lismore, to stay with Fanny, in the year of the Old Queen's Jubilee. There was to be a Choral Festival in the Cathedral, and we were to be added to the Lismore choir, in which Fanny, though no longer organist, still "carried a pike," singing a vigorous alto, and generally holding things together (or disintegrating them when she took the fancy to do so). Also, my sister and I were to be taken down the Blackwater and shown the town of Youghal.

Our journey from Cork was not devoid of incident. In our carriage were two ladies, one fat, middle-aged, jolly-looking; the other elderly, deplorable of aspect, suggestive of a worn-out and widowed dachshund. The dachshund was bemoaning the accumulated afflictions of one of her friends. Had she looked less wretched one would have said that she was subconsciously enjoying herself in the narration.

"And now, Mrs. Cronin," she perorated, looking more than ever like a heart-broken dachshund, "Isn't that enough to draw tears from the veins of your heart?"

The fat lady, ignoring the functional difficulty of the suggested mark of sympathy, replied, very cheerfully, "Ah, yes, indeed! And I heard

the very same meself of the way she is, the poor thing! 'Tis aa'f'ly sad, reely! But sure *I* say, what is life? 'Tis only a few years! Then we'll *all* be dead!" with a comfortable laugh, she added, "*That's* the way to look at it, Mrs. Pinder, my dear!"

Just then we arrived at Fermoy, and found that our train was thirty-five minutes late. Our train for Lismore had gone, and we had four hours to wait for the next one. So for us, as well as for Mrs. Pinder, the only consolation was that offered by the philosophy of the fat lady.

* * * * *

The Choral Festival passed off quietly; an expression which must not be taken in a literal sense, since, on such occasions, zeal, and a readiness to oblige, are usually manifested by a consistent *fortissimo*. When the tumult and the shouting had died, the Captains and Kings departed according to plan, and took ship for Youghal, on board a small steamer appertaining to the Lismore Salmon Fisheries, which had been lent to Fanny for the occasion.

Youghal, ancient and historical town though it is, has not much of picturesqueness to condone its extreme uncleanliness. Its greatness, when it was one of the principal ports of sailing for England, is past, and its chief claims to distinction are the possession of a fine Elizabethan church, and of the wonderful old house, Myrtle Grove, with its memories of Edmund Spenser, and Sir Walter Raleigh, and, in these later days, of another good servant of his Queen in far lands, Sir Henry Blake, a son of one of those ancient Anglo-Norman families that are called "The Tribes of Galway"; one of the most able and

personally delightful of men, who might well be taken as the type for the high standard, set long ago, as an example of a Galway life.

"*He has a curious mind, boy,*
It's jovial, it's refined, boy.
It's richly fraught with random thought
And feelings wildly kind, boy!

"*So bold and frank his bearing, boy,*
Did you meet him onward faring, boy,
In Lapland's snows, or Chili's glows,
You'd say 'What news from Erin, boy'!"

* * * * *

As a seaport, Youghal was, when we visited it, mainly distinguished as the place of departure of what was unaffectedly known as "The Seasick Boat," a vessel to which the inland country people resorted for the purpose indicated by its title. This was believed to be of great advantage to health, and, if the desired result were not achieved, we were assured that but half the price of the trip was exacted. But of this I cannot be certain, nor even if the facility is still offered, not having sought for personal experience.

Fanny and Hildegarde and I lived on board the "Miriam" for three days, very happily, with three small dogs to bear us company. One of them was mine, the Puppet, a much-travelled little fox-terrier, who had been in that same year smuggled to and from Paris in a carpet-bag. One narrow escape had been his—or rather his owner's. The Customs Examination was then carried out on the deck of the steamer. Before the Customs Officer came to Martin and me, the Puppet was removed from the bag, and was concealed in the voluminous sleeves of Martin's

travelling cloak, half a Puppet in each sleeve. I then fearlessly offered the carpet-bag for inspection. There was nothing in it but a hot lump of sugar and a heavy smell. The officer apparently found that these were not dutiable, and affixed the chalk mark without hesitation. Just then, raising our eyes to the bridge, we perceived the Captain and First Officer of the steamer, with their eyes fixed upon us, but, since both were laughing unrestrainedly, we assumed their sympathy, and laughed back, and the incident ended satisfactorily. At Youghal the Puppet was less fortunate, for he had a species of fit, that ended in his rushing over the end of a quay into the sea. Luckily, however, the "Miriam's" boat was there, and he was rescued, restored to his right mind by the shock.

THE PUPPET.

Following on the Puppet's attempt at suicide, I nearly made the expedition memorable by getting myself drowned. Being occasionally given to walking in my sleep, I selected, at about 2 a.m., the narrow deck of the "Miriam," with bulwarks barely knee-high, to perambulate, calling the dogs, meanwhile, so plausibly as to persuade my comrades that I was awake. There is a fierce current in Youghal Harbour, and had my Guardian Angel not been attending to me very carefully, I should have crossed the Bar long before anyone else,

save, I suppose, that official, discovered my absence.

The only other incident mentioned in my diary—beyond sketching difficulties in the unfriendly streets, when a repulsed and repulsive beggar-man informed me that he had known me ever and always, since the time I was thravellin' the counthry in a pack on my mother's back, and she stealin' whatever'd be in her coorse—refers to the efforts of my sister, who was cook to the expedition, to render eatable an aged but still muscular duck.

A REPULSED BEGGAR-MAN.

"H.'s dinner not quite so successful as usual. She hashed the duck, and the sauce was composed—*faute de mieux*—of flour, sugar, and onions. A sort of onion jam. Awful. Bed early and hungry."

* * * * *

I cannot leave the subject of Lismore without mention of salmon fishing, the local point round which the life of all there palpitates, even though I am well aware of my gross ignorance of all save its most superficial aspects. I have heard of a very wise man who was asked if he liked fishing. The question was put on a day of heavy

rain, and was inspired by the sight of a lake, on whose inky waters tossed a small boat, in which a lonely fisherman flogged the waves in vain.

"Do I like fishin', is it?" said the sage. "Look here now. If I was to go up to a harr'm-less man in the street, and knock him down, and injure him severely and be brought before the magisthrates, and the magisthrates was to sentence me to one half-hour of that work, the whole civilized worr'ld'd be cryin' out at the enorr'mity of me punishment!"

This may be an over-statement, but I find myself in sympathy with it.

On our southern coasts there is a tenet among the fishermen that the mention of a fox will bring bad luck. If one should say to a fishing boat, setting forth on her business, "Have you seen the fox?" that boat will catch nothing.

I can only suppose that my connection with foxhounds must have constituted me an anti-mascot. Often as I have gone down to the Black-water to watch the great artists at work, I have never yet seen a salmon caught. Not even by Jack Lynch, one of the greatest of them, as he is well aware.

"There was a grand lady staying up with the King at the Castle that time," so Mr. Lynch has told a friend of the rod, "'Jack Lynch,' she says to me, 'If you get me shtuck into a fish,' says she, 'I'll give ye what'll keep ye blind drunk for a week!' says she. And, begob, she did too! More luck to her!"

I have heard, from the same authority, of a conflict between a distinguished angler and his sense of duty, in which also Jack Lynch had his part. (And, since the lordly Blackwater has

had among its fishermen many of the greatest names in our rough island story, any attempt to identify the hero of this tale will be fruitless.)

The death of a high dignitary of the Church had occurred and the angler conceived it to be fitting that he should attend the funeral—funerals in Ireland being functions of peculiar and commanding importance—but, as there was time in hand before the special train should depart, it seemed as well to spend it at the river (since the fish were rising nicely) as elsewhere.

"Well" (the story is again Jack Lynch's), "I got his Grace nicely shtuck into a good fish. 'Easy now, yer Grace!' says I. 'Take yer time,' says I, 'don't hurry him at all!' 'But sure I has to go to the Bishop's funeral!' says his Grace. 'Bad cess to ye, Jack Lynch,' says he to me. 'Would ye have me miss the thrain?' says he. 'Easy now, yer Grace! Easy!' says I. 'Arrah what Bishop?' says I to him. 'To Hell with the Bishop!' says I. 'Go easy with the fish now—' I says——"

I know not if the fish or the funeral was lost. The main application of the incident is the consideration of what Jack Lynch, and Ireland generally, will lose if the friendly fishermen, and hunting-men, and sportsmen of all ranks and degrees, are driven out of the country by those live-wire-pullers whose policy has been to make Ireland, literally, as well as metaphorically, too hot to hold any save themselves. It may be said to be a passing phase, but the ruined homes have passed, and cannot return. So also have passed, and are still passing, the prosperity and civilization that only wealth and culture have it in their power to give to a country which has never had a superfluity of either of these

advantages. There still remain in Ireland beautiful places, ancient castles, and manor-houses, that have gathered round them communities of skilled and prosperous work-people, who find in what were once known as "Gentlemen to the Backbone," their best friends and employers. Lismore is not the only small town that has grown up round such a centre. *Noblesse oblige* is still the maxim that governs the lives of those men and women to whom it applies, and in the service of their families men have lived and grown old, confident that in old age they will be cared for with a personal friendship that is traditional, and has never failed. Ireland lost and France gained, when Patrick Sarsfield and the Wild Geese flew over the seas, and with the casting out of the unique product of centuries of breeding from the best of two races, there crashes down more than half a civilization.

CHAPTER XXII

VIEWS AND AN INTERVIEW

IT is impossible to write of contemporary Ireland without being betrayed into expressions of opinion that are, like those of Cassandra, merely wasted expenditure of emotion —are also, possibly, boring. But I think it is neither devoid of interest nor uninstructive to look back, and to see to what extent the prophecies and expectations of a dozen years ago have been justified by subsequent events.

In 1912 an Englishman, a Liberal, a Protestant, and a person of entire sincerity in his anxiety to find a panacea for Irish discontent, and, incidentally, in his belief that he was the man to find it, made a tour of Ireland. Amongst other authorities—for he had already nearly boxed the Irish compass—he was advised to apply to Martin Ross for her views on the subject. (In our long partnership she has always been the politician. My share in such matters, from the days of infant disloyalty and onwards, has, unfortunately, been to indulge in confident prediction, on a romantic basis, and to find myself invariably wrong.)

The Englishman's visit took place on a dark and damp February afternoon. He was in the capable hands of one of the ablest of Irish Roman Catholic patriots, a great Churchman, and an experienced statesman, and, it is pleasant to be

able to say, a personal friend of ours. Martin was set down to the Englishman, and the Churchman and I talked of Shakespeare, and the Musical Glasses, moving on, in all amity, to the then burning question of Woman Suffrage. I had, not long before, convened a meeting in the Town Hall in Skibbereen, and a Norwegian speaker, Miss Helga Gill, young, pretty, and persuasive, and not the less attractive for the touch of foreign-ness in her ways and words, gave an admirable address and made many converts. (But these did not, I gathered, include the Churchman.) The Englishman and Martin, however, devoted themselves wholly to the even more burning question of Home Rule, and in order that their conversation should be the more undisturbed, the Inquirer was led forth by the Lecturer, and together they perambulated the dripping shrubbery walks, in discourse so deep that I believe neither was aware of the thin persistent rain, that was faithfully conforming with the English convention in connection with the habits of our Irish climate, and was doing its best to impart local colour—perhaps I should say water-colour—to the occasion.

After the departure of the Englishman, Martin, as is the custom in such cases, proceeded to remember all the important facts and arguments that she had left, or thought she had left, unsaid, and, spent, faint, yet pursuing, she sat her down and wrote him a letter that would, she trusted, "sing in his sleeping ears, and hum in his waking head," and would be less transitory than words, since words, even though they be winged, may fly in the wrong direction.

She kept a copy of her letter, and although it is now ancient history, it is not, I think, the less

interesting for that. I did not agree with her at the time she wrote it, but I am afraid that, as usual, she has been proved more nearly right than I.

With a few eliminations of names, etc., that she would, I know, prefer to have omitted, I will transcribe the letter exactly as it stands.

"Drishane,

Feb. 12, 1912.

DEAR MR. ——

I think that when you were here I spoke to you of a book written by an Irish American, who calls himself 'Rocky Mountain O'Brien'* I send you its full name and address as it has a good deal of bearing upon a point that I brought forward to you, viz. the element of danger for Home Rule that lies in the Irish-American Fenian point of view.

It means rabid hatred of England—foaming, gnashing hatred, as you will see if you get hold of the book. It has been handed round quietly here among the young men, and I have seen it and been horrified at it and its statements about the English and their army. Its author is now, I understand, living in Ireland. The title-page of the book is as follows: '*Birth and Adoption*, a book of Prose and Poetry by Rocky Mountain O'Brien. 1904. Price bound in cloth, 1 dollar. Paper 50 c. Post paid to any part of the world. Address Patrick Rocky Mountain O'Brien. 20 Walker St., New York.' The author is, I believe, now in Ireland, and quite enters into things in the district in which he now lives—presents prizes

* *Mr. O'Brien died in America in* 1922.

for Athletic Sports, is a member of a local Agric. Society.

I forgot to ask you whether you had ever come across a newspaper now published in Ireland, called *Irish Freedom*, which also is handed quietly about and is very difficult to buy. It, too, ought to enlighten English people as to the feelings of the extreme party in this country.

What I should have liked to impress upon you was the nature of the team that would have to be driven under Home Rule. The Irish in America number, I believe, fifteen millions. Every Irish peasant, roughly speaking, has more relations in America than at home. All these have imbibed Republicanism on top of their native blood-and-bone dislike of England—Modern Socialism, of course, too—and they have also imbibed money, and can back their opinions with it, as the National Party in Ireland can tell. Besides this American, and very rancorous influence, there are at least two others, flourishing in the country, and highly anti-English. The Sinn Fein (pronounced 'Shin Fane'), which means Ourselves Alone. Their gospel is that of total severance and apartness from England. They are strong in Dublin and in the East of Ireland, and have many times shown their teeth to other Nationalists. There is also the Gaelic League, excellent in many of its ways and works, but secretly highly disloyal, in spite of its insistent profession of being non-political. I have seen one of its prize books (as I think I told you), given to a little boy for dancing and singing. It is a trumpet-call to war with England—partly written in Irish. You heard

yourself what the little boy in the school said about taking the side of Germany if war broke out. That is the spirit in which the children are taught in their Irish classes. It is a pity that a language so cultivating and so spiritual should be the weapon of a party.

I bring forward these things because they show what wild and dangerous blood is in the team that an Irish Parliament would have to drive—and, as always, the party with the money could do most, and that is the party that could command Irish-American money for the purpose of injuring England. The gentleman of whom you spoke to me, and other truly open-minded, sentimental Home Rulers, says that all will be Peace under Home Rule. He is a Roman Catholic, and has a high opinion of the power of his Church, and believes that the selection of the best men of all classes and creeds will be at once secured—with the help of the priests. He has naturally been deeply influenced by the strong personality, and the practical knowledge, and the genuine desire of the friend who brought you here, to serve Ireland. But the power of the Roman Catholic Church under Home Rule is a most uncertain thing. Under English rule, with all its monarchical tradition and favour towards Roman Catholics, that power is dwindling before the inevitable march of education, and the reflected glare of the Socialism of Europe. It seems to me that under Home Rule there would first be Vatican Law, and after that, the sure revolt against it—a bad business too. The notion that Ireland, with cotton-wool in her ears, and her back turned to England and her face to America, will be

able to ignore Socialism is indeed an optimistic one. For these reasons I think that the R. C. Church will be delighted if Home Rule is defeated. They led the people in the Land War, now they are running beside them, hoping that the pace will not be maintained.

What I myself feel to be too good for health is the sudden change in the tone of the Irish leaders towards what may still for want of a better name, be called the Landlord Class. Until a year or two ago they were Blood-suckers, English Garrison, Tyrants, Oppressors, and Carrion Crows. All that has ceased as if by signal, and the silence is almost stunning. That that class is, in future, to be essential to Ireland, from its worth, its high-class conscience, its culture, is the next thing we are told—it is gratifying, but alarming. A feeling akin to physical nausea passed over me when I read of the Irish Nationalists at Mr. Churchill's meeting singing the National Anthem. Mr. Redmond would hardly do that in America. Here, it is many years since we have ventured to have it at our entertainments. The people do not thrust their politics at us, nor we ours at them.

To ignore all this is not wise, and to try to make circumstances fit a theory is not, I believe, the Baconian method of reasoning.

I think the class that may yet be the back-bone of Ireland, and its best bulwark against Socialism, is the small farmer who has bought his land. He is not liked by the Radicals because he owns property, but he is a sane and sensible man on the whole, who has got what he wants and wishes for quietness.

Neither he nor the Priests have anything particular to gain from Home Rule.

Nor, indeed, has Ireland, now enjoying the fruition of England's sense of responsibility for the past centuries of bad government. Home Rule is no reparation. A starveling isolation is cold comfort. It is even worse than that. Yet this isolation is what the strong extreme party will always struggle for. The present Home Rule Bill is only making the Irish Parliament England's housekeeper, and I should think the Sinn Feiners and that lot would laugh at it, and it would be the mother of endless fighting.

Ulster I have not spoken of, because it is so immense and obvious. Also, I do not personally know Ulster. The question of the religions is serious everywhere under Home Rule. Up there it is a thunder cloud, and the storm will come as surely as I write this, if Home Rule is forced on Ulster.

And all this is for what? To gratify a purely sentimental, and partly torpid, and largely seditious desire to separate from England—nominally possessed by two-thirds of the country. These two-thirds, as you know, represent the least educated and least prosperous of the population—though, also, the most imaginative, clever, pleasant and good-natured—and, in addition to all this, the most politically excitable, contentious, childish, and thin-skinned—armed, too, with an exquisite gift of expression.

You must now regret that you ever talked to me of Ireland! I have returned it sevenfold into your bosom, and I have done something of the same sort for Mr. Stephen Gywnn.

There is so much to say that it is difficult to stop.

I hope the rest of your tour has been pleasant, and that the snow found you in the fold of Maynooth, and not in the long roads of Donegal or Meath. I am sure that you have heard enough to bewilder anyone.

I shall always remember what you told me of the Salvation Army and its achievements. I have always believed in these miracles, but it is warming to the heart to know of them at first hand. . . . Sincerely yours.

VIOLET MARTIN."

CHAPTER XXIII

CAPITAL LETTERS

IT has been a tradition of my mother's family to write what were invariably described by her and her fellows as "Capital Letters." Though such a label may suggest large type, and the importance that the printing-press has in its power to bestow, I am sure that no play upon the meaning of the words was intended. My mother and her sisters, in their eager practicality and constant excitement about the realities of life, had no time for mere verbal toys. To cut the cackle and get to the 'osses (but the horses in a strictly metaphorical sense only) was all that they cared for, and for them the Capital Letter was the letter of incident, that swept on without follies, fancies, or literary *finesse*. If the incidents were amusingly recounted it was so much to the good; but this was not exacted.

It was expected by my mother of the recipient of a Capital Letter that he or she should, on its receipt, instantly read it aloud at the breakfast-table, or in a similarly public place. Moreover, if it pleased her, she would demand that it should be yielded by the owner for general circulation, with the not infrequent result that the writer found himself involved in blood-feuds with distant relatives that were as complex as they were unanticipated.

It was typical of Martin Ross to be intolerant not only of the phrase, but still more of this custom. She declared that from all points of view she detested Capital Letters, and, knowing that her own letters were inevitably included under that heading, it was her malign practice to interpolate stumbling-blocks that should cause the reader-aloud to fall in ruins, unless she (for it was always I) had found opportunity and a red chalk pencil, and had flagged the dangers.

I admit that my own feeling, like my mother's, is a desire to broadcast good letters, because there are in such a freshness and spontaneity, and a human heart-to-heartness that have never yet informed the printed word (or rather, the word that has been written for the printer). My mother was herself a vigorous, and interesting, and straightforward letter writer. (As an example of these qualities I may cite her comments on a photograph of myself with which she was much pleased. "I am very glad," she wrote, "that a photograph *can* be taken of you that is neither an idiotic grinner or a self-grave-digger.") In this same letter, which was written to me when I was staying in Düsseldorf with one of my aunts, she gave us a description of certain local events, that is so vivid, and, taken in connection with the letter that I have quoted in the preceding chapter, so interesting, that it undoubtedly comes under the heading of a Capital Letter, and as such shall be suitably circulated.

It was written in the late spring of 1881, and it describes a phase of what was then known as the Land War. Fifteen years earlier had been the Fenian War, forty years later came what is called "The English War," and on its heels has followed Civil War! Peace, in Ireland, as in the

Lake Isle of Innisfree (if I may misquote Mr. Yeats) does indeed come "dropping slow."

My mother and father were Irish Loyalists of the old, unquestioning kind, and, having consciences void of offence in their own dealings with their tenants, were, I now think, not able to sympathize with the people's discontent, or to believe in the existence of grievances acute enough to justify or condone revolt. It is a question that need not now be discussed. I transcribe the letter solely on its artistic merits, as, in fact, a Capital Letter, and without comment, feeling that, on both sides, there is too much to be said.

"There is dreadful work going on now in S——, 'The West is awake,' and the result of this awakening is that yesterday the town was crammed with troops. I must begin from the beginning. A short time ago a tenant of the Judge's, living at B—— made himself so conspicuous as a Land Leaguer that a warrant was sent down to arrest him under the Coercion Act. Great was the row that ensued! Twice he was rescued, and in the end the police had to retire to their barracks, there not being enough of them to fight it out. However, Mr. O'—— (the Land Leaguer) said he would like to show the government he could do what the police were not able to do, so, with his warrant in his hand, and surrounded by thousands of country people, he marched, or rather, was carried on the shoulders of the people, to S——, bands playing and green boughs waving! There he took the train and went to D——, where he was pinned and '*quodded*.' Well, all this business in B——

stirred up the people to fever heat, and a 'shave' being spread that the priest there was to be arrested, they began outrages by wrecking ever so many houses, and threatened to burn the whole town. In consequence of this, on Tuesday night all the police, with the exception of three, were sent from S—— to B—— to coerce the people there into being good. Their departure from S—— was the signal for the roughs of the town to begin their work, and on Wednesday night they began by going to X——'s shop, and to punish him for hiring horses and cars to the police, they tore down every bit of his house! I never in all my life saw such a wreck as it is now! Every bit of grocery destroyed, and all the furniture in the upstairs rooms made into matches! X—— came out to them and begged them to stop, but they only hit him on the head, and they never left the place till it was completely destroyed. I hear the women looked, as one of the shop-keepers told me yesterday, like 'devils from Hell,' much worse than the men.

Having finished at X——'s, they then proceeded through the town, smashing windows in every direction. The Riot Act was read three times, and then the police (though only three in number) charged and bayonetted several, but the Head Constable himself got what they call 'a sthroke' from a stone, which all but killed him, and he is now in hospital. The priest, Father O'——, rushed out and begged them to stop, but they told him he was no Leaguer, and they would not mind him, and they threw stones at him, and were preparing to destroy Z——'s shop, when, providentially, the march of the troops was heard! They

had been telegraphed for at 12 o'clock that day in anticipation of a rising in the West, and a special train was despatched at once, with a Flying Column, consisting of a Co. of the Rifle Brigade, some men of the 20th, a lot of A.S.C., Royal Artillery, a gun, and a lot of ambulance wagons; also Engineers to put up the Telegraph wires which had been destroyed between S—— and B——, and the bridges which had been thrown down.

The troops marched in at 2 in the morning, just as Z——'s was about to be wrecked, and of course they soon reduced the people to order. Papa and I went into S—— yesterday, Wednesday, and the place was alive with soldiers and horses. It was exactly like a circus coming in! Such crowds in the streets, and such tearing backwards and forwards of beautiful mules and horses, the people cursing and spitting as they passed them. The soldiers have all left the town now, excepting a hundred of the Rifle Brigade, who are quartered in the Town Hall. The Magistrates held a meeting yesterday, and sent up a requisition for 200 troops to be kept permanently in S——, and of course the Govt. will have to give them, otherwise there would be no answering for the consequences. No words can describe the agitation that is going on now everywhere in Ireland, and most people believe it will only be put down by military action. Even Forster thinks now they don't care 2d. for the Land Bill, in fact they would much rather not have it, but since Parnell, the other day, in the House, said he '*feared*' there would be many more outrages and more landlords killed because the government will not pass an act

to prevent evictions, the row has been twice as bad, evidently showing that the people understand his prophecy to mean *Orders for Outrages*, and obey him they have, and will!

There is to be a Land League meeting here, in Shanacluan, on Sunday week. Rumour says that Father Mc—— is to be arrested, and I am afraid if he is there will be dreadful work in this parish, that up to this has been so quiet. Papa had a letter from Claud this morning, from Meath. He says affairs in the North are going from bad to worse, and there are great fears that frightful scenes are in store for the country. No one can guess what will be the end of it all. The poor shopkeepers yesterday, telling me about the events of the night before, spoke in low whispers, they were so afraid they might be overheard. —— said to me, 'It was the Mercy of God that saved me and my house last night! Had they but known I had Mr. ——' (the man who had been fired at, a loyalist and a Protestant) 'in my house, nothing could have saved me! He now has to leave his home and fly the country, his life not being safe.'

Another man, ——, was as pale as ashes while he was telling me what he went through all night, and poor Mrs. S—— of the Bank, looked as if she could never sleep again from fright! Her description of the screams, shouts, horns blowing, and orders to '*Fire!*' followed by volleys of *stones* being thrown and panes of glass being smashed, was most vivid and awful. X—— (a tenant) has not paid us his rent yet, but he promises to do so, and I trust he will! He hates the League, but so do hundreds who are obliged to join it to save

their own lives, as well as their wives' and children's. I am afraid this coming meeting will do a great deal of harm in the parish——"

But I don't think it can have done so. Not if any inference may be drawn from the vast concourse of mourners at my grandfather's funeral. His death took place a year later, in the very fiery heart of the troubles that had darkened the closing years of his long and honourable life; troubles that had shaken his faith in that which had always been for him, as for his only son, my father, beyond doubting, fixed as the stars—England's loyalty to her friends. But to the end of his life his tenants were faithful to him. When he died they shared, to the last man of them, the honour of carrying him the long mile and a half to Saint Barrahane's old churchyard, down by the Castle Haven Strand, even as, sixteen years later, they keened my father to the same resting-place. And for those who know, it is enough to say that for landlords, and Protestants, the *caoine* was raised by those who had been their people.

* * * * *

It is no more than Martin Ross's intolerance of "Capital Letters" deserves than that she should herself be included among the elect who write them, and should suffer the consequent penalty. Therefore, though not solely for that reason, a few extracts from some of her letters may here be given.

It is twenty years, and more, since she wrote of her first meeting with the writer who, among modern poets, I think she rated highest; and it may be added that a more critical and fastidious taste than hers it would be difficult to find.

I withhold his name, because the description will suffice for those who know, and, as "a story" it will, I hope, equally suffice for those who don't.

"August, 1901. Mr. X—— looks just what I expected, a cross between a Dominie Sampson and a starved R. C. curate, in seedy black clothes, with a large black bow at the root of his long naked throat. He is egregiously the poet—mutters ends of verse to himself with a wild eye, bows over your hand in dark silence—but poet he *is*, and very interesting indeed, and sympathetic to talk to. I liked him and I got on well with him. He gave an opinion of me to A—— of which I feel inclined to repeat only the remarkable adjective 'Simple.' I didn't know I was that—nor, perhaps, did you!"

(No, I did not; but I believe that the profounder insight of a Poet discerned the clarity and purity of heart that was behind the subtle, meditative, inventing, ever-appraising brain, and knew that in greatness there is ever simplicity.)

"It is strange to talk of what B—— used to call 'Deep subjects of Life and Death,' without any self-consciousness, and I must say he induces that, and does it himself. He is not at all without a sense of humour, which surprises me. He thinks 'The Real Charlotte' very big. . . . He thinks we have the love of sincerity, etc., which he considers makes great novelists. . . . But he doesn't approve of humour for humour's sake. Here Miss Martin said beautiful things about Humour being a high art—I will tell you more when we meet, and you will be awfully bored before I am done. . . ."

She goes on to say that she and the Poet wandered forth together through the gardens and woods, holding the while converse both high and deep.

"I smoked, and literary conversation raged, and my cigarette went out. It was windy by the lake; I couldn't make the matches light, and he held the little dingy lappets of his coat out, and I lighted the match in his bosom. No-one was there, and I trust no-one saw, as it must have looked very funny."

Later, in the same year, she was in Dublin, and wrote to me of her impressions of Mr. George Moore's and Mr. W. B. Yeats' play, "Diarmuid and Grania," which was being given at the Gaiety Theatre.

"Oct. 28, 1901 . . . I must tell you of the Irish Plays, to which E. and I went on Friday night . . . Mr. and Mrs. Benson's company did it, and I may say that a more unattractive hero than Mr. B. I have seldom seen. In his love-making he moaned over Mrs. B.'s face like a cat when a dog comes into the room . . . I thought it all a strange mixture of saga and modern French situations, George Moore and Yeats were each palpable throughout, the former in the situations, the latter in the beautiful writing here and there, and in the peculiar simplicities that arose. It was hardly a play for E. I am afraid, the Biblical terms not being shrunk from to describe the progress of the emotions of Grania, who was excessively French in her loves. In the first act she is on the verge of an enforced marriage with Finn; she states, without any contemptible subterfuge

her reasons for objecting to this, and finally deludes Finn's friend, Diarmuid, into falling in love with her, and taking her away from the marriage feast, *à la* Young Lochinvar. He only yields after much love-making on her part, then—Curtain.

The next act is some time afterwards, and the really novel position is that Grania has become tired of Diarmuid. I give George Moore some credit for that. Never was anything like her ecstasies of love for him in the first act. She then falls in love with Finn (which she might have done in the beginning, and saved the writing of the play) and the Curtain is Diarmuid's discovery of the fact, and his resolve to go and hunt an enchanted boar, which the Family Witch (a stout lady in a grey teagown and a conversational English accent) has prophesied out of her spinning wheel is to be the death of him. The last act is Grania's noble endeavours to dissuade him from the hunt, amid much thunder and lightning, out in the woods. He makes one or two as outspoken remarks to her on her conduct as George Moore could wish, and retires to hunt the boar. After interludes, there is a banging and a roaring at the back, and Diarmuid is carried in to make dying speeches to Finn and Grania, and to be carried off to a funeral march, with Grania striking attitudes all round the stage. Finally the Court humorist, alone on the stage, says, 'Grand will be the burning of Diarmuid, but grander will be Grania's welcome to Finn!'

If this is the lofty purity of the Irish Drama I am indeed mystified. But I believe the authors both believe that it is very grand to

be the victim of a variety of fancies, like Mr. S—— who burst in to a friend's studio to say that he had 'never before been in love with a serpent-charmer.' Still, there are great points in the play, and unusual moments——"

A few years later, in 1905, Martin was again in Dublin. She says:

"Last night I whipped on to a car after dinner and sped to the Abbey Theatre to see Augusta's* play, 'Kincora.' I can't go into it now, but it is well written, interesting, and artistically staged, and, with two exceptions, ill acted. But there was a refinement and earnestness through all. Afterwards A. swept me and others to tea *on the stage*. A stranger thing I have seldom done, and oh! the discomfort of the sloping stage floor! I was introduced to the Tragedy Queen (who had swallowed a poker in token of sovereignty, but had retained her brogue through all), and A. (who swept me about as if I were blind and drunk), also introduced Lord M——, who was wholly uninterested in me, and is a great rebel (so I hear). I then talked very enjoyably to the leading comedian—Fay—a first-rate little actor, I thought—Then W. B. Yeats, and *very* high-class conversation, inspired by sips of black tea and a cheese-cake. . . . On Saturday I slipped off again to the Abbey Theatre by myself, and saw Yeats' beautiful little play, 'The King's Threshold.' It quite took me into another world, and was very well acted on the whole. The quiet accessories, the absence of gesture, the metrical and true

* *Lady Gregory.*

delivery of the blank verse, and the real feeling, made it a complete thing. . . . I saw Yeats, but in the distance. He had implored me to come and hear his play, and acknowledge that blank verse, perfectly spoken, is the proper vehicle for poetry, and I was sorry not to be able to tell him that I thought it perfect for *acting*, but that for reading to oneself the charm of metres and rhymes was as the power of different sorts of music. I had the pleasure of telling him that I thought it a sin to throw such beautiful weapons out of his armoury. He assured me that his plays were full of lyrics. He *does* write well. . . ."

I am sorry that Time, and Space, and Relativity (by which I mean to refer to comments on Relatives) and similar cosmic forces, combine to forbid many further quotations from Martin's letters, but I may include two more extracts, one of which, if I may argue from personal experience, will appeal to a circle of those fellow-sufferers who may be defined as *débutante*-godmothers, that is wide enough to justify its inclusion.

(London) " The christening of L.'s daughter has been accomplished, at All Saints, Margaret St., a pitch-dark place, as you doubtless know. I arrived a little early, as became a godmother, and found a party of people already assembled, to whom I joined myself, and waited for the baby. They were all strangers and looked at me rather hard. The baby's mamma's people, I decided.

Then C. arrived, and joined me, and still the baby and company did not turn up; but beautiful gentlemen began to emerge from the vestry in black coats and smirks. Then *the*

Bride and Bridegroom! C. and the poor godmother fled swiftly into side aisles, and the wedding looked daggers at them, and their convulsions—and well they might. . . .

The Christening was very alarming. To me was the task of handing the Baby to the Curate, who stood high on a step, behind the font, and my heart beat with terror as the time approached. The night before I had rehearsed the affair, with the assistance of Edith, Hildegarde, and a small female fox terrier, named Dooley. From the arm of Hildegarde (the Nurse) I took Dooley (the Baby, lying on her back in acute alarm), and handed her to Edith (the Clergyman), by which time we were all in hysterics—but it served its purpose. The baby was *not* presented feet first to the Curate.

He, also, was nervous, and no wonder; He had already changed stoles with the verger in the middle of the Creed, enough to shake anyone's nerve. It all led to his pouring cataracts of water over the baby's head, which she naturally took to be a practical joke in the worst taste, and uttered furious steam-whistle yells. Pamela June are her names, chosen by her mother, and watered with the tears of the victim.

. . . We sat up late, as usual, and C. and I still hung over the fire while E." (her sister) "went to bed. At midnight, suddenly, like a wind, a rushing of footsteps over head, and another rushing up from below, and a voice shouting for water. C. didn't guess what was happening at first, and went to see. I flew to his room and got the water-jug, when I got downstairs the hall was all glowing and flickering from fire in

the dining-room. I gave the jug to C. and tore up two storeys for my own jug, meeting on the landing one of our fellow-lodgers, a Frenchman in a skull cap and shirt, cramming into his trousers. He seemed half stupefied. In one moment the house was full of pungent, stinking smoke. When I got down it was like a thing in a dream. The front dining-room full of people, the back room thick with smoke, and the windows outlined in glowing eyes of fire. It was all out but the smoulder, but in that moment of blaze, curtains, blind, towel-horse, dressing-table, and chest of drawers, were mostly burned. Monsieur, the landlord, had got at it before C. came, and between them they pitched water at it and stopped it. It was a *very* near thing, as there was no more water in the house. The woman who had set the curtains on fire was in her nightgown, her face the colour of tallow, and streaming with perspiration. You never saw such a sight. Need I say that E. giggled throughout, because of the extraordinary throng of people and children that suddenly filled the room, most of them talking French. A gentleman in a yachting cap mixed in, also talking French. Nothing more ludicrous could have been imagined—everyone gasping and choking, some half fainting. The gentleman in the yachting cap proved to be the Head Waiter at the B——! It certainly was a close shave. If the fire had got another minute's hold nothing could have stopped it. I must say my heart gave a cowardly drop within me when I saw that horrid red flicker in the hall. . . ."

* * * * *

It was like Martin to come in for a fire, and like her, too, to have instantly realized the situation and acted upon it. Fires seemed to follow her. Ross House caught fire, and was only saved by her efforts, abetted by those of my sister, who, among other firemanlike feats, flung a number of silver entrée-dishes out of the dining-room window, into the bushes beyond the area, unaware of the presence there of a mother-duck, hatching her eggs. The duck lay prostrate beneath the entrée-dishes, like Tarpeia under the Roman shields. But when, the alarm past, the dishes were removed, she was found still (necessarily) on her nest (for the dishes were heavy) yet uninjured, attending imperturbably to her domestic duties.

I have myself seen Martin's swiftness in action, when I set alight the curtains of our room in a Paris hotel. In a second she had torn down the blazing rags and had thrust them out of the window, while I was still grappling with a brimming india-rubber travelling bath, whose contents belched in soapy floods over everything except the flames. Another time when I, again, and with an equal fatuity, had dropped a silver spoon into the centre of a red turf fire, before I had done more than utter a single howl of horror, Martin had darted a hand into the very heart of the fire and had plucked the spoon forth, and had done so with such dauntless speed that (as in the good priest's passage through Purgatory) "there wasn't so much as a singe on her!"

CHAPTER XXIV

IN KERRY

IT was in the summer of 1915, to be exact, on August the first, a sunny, showery Sunday, that Martin Ross and I found ourselves deep in the heart of the Kingdom of Kerry, eight Irish miles from anywhere on the map; and when one says "eight Irish miles" as a definition of distance, it is as though, in assessing time, one said, "as long as until Yesterday comes again."

But to be marooned at an indefinite distance from everywhere, was precisely the position that we most ardently desired. We sank gladly into the heart of Kerry, and the Slough—which is what in Kerry they call the bogs—closed over our heads.

For nearly eight long years I have thought of those Kerry weeks, and known that did Yesterday indeed come again, it would be from among those yesterdays that I would choose my day. But there were so many, and so perfect days, the choice would not be easy. August days on the wet yellow strand, with the stream spreading in silver lace-work over it, with little black cattle standing knee-deep in the smooth sea, and everywhere a blazing blueness, and seagulls screaming, because schools of fish were running in the bay between us and those pale pyramids of azure on the horizon, those far islands that are

IN KERRY

called The Skelligs. Or lazy, lovely September days on the Slough ; lying full length on a massed embroidery of flowers, close and gorgeous as the patterns on a Chinese cloak ; larks larking overhead, rising and falling like fountains bubbling with music. On the whole, I think the chosen day should be one of those that we spent wandering over the sloughs, and, of them, that memorable one upon which a certain small, white Mother and Daughter found their first hare. A super-rabbit, they believed her, as she broke from behind a super-*crumpáwn* in the slough. *Crumpáwns* are the lumps of bog-stuff and heather that stand in water, and form the surface of many sloughs, and are the result of operations that I am unable to explain, nor whether they be of men, or of the Maker of sloughs. I know only that for those who are following, and are desirous of keeping in view, dogs in delirious chase, they form singularly ankle-twisting going.

But there should be no recapturing of one of those August days, a day of shame, "featuring," to borrow the chaste idiom of the Cinema, a cat, a small cat, seated on a haycock of rushes, looking with composure at her world. Near her was, presumably, her escort, two boys, making more haycocks.

The companion of the dogs, with kindly patronage, and adapting, as she believed, her language to her listeners, said to the boys :

"Mind out now would the dogs hunt your cat ! "

The boys, who appeared to be stone deaf, and were entirely apathetic, continued to rake rushes together. The small cat, however, instantly took action. Springing from her cock, she attacked the dogs, and as, taken horribly by

surprise, they fled before her, she clawed, with cries of rage, their rounded, and temporarily tailless, sterns. I, who was the dogs' companion, followed in pursuit of the party, flinging my painting-gear to earth, reserving only a sketching stool as a weapon. The end came at a briar patch, into which the pursuer leaped sideways—it was probably her nursery—and, the order of battle being then reversed, it was well for the little cat that I had retained the sketching stool. It was an incident shattering to all concerned, save to the owners of the cat, who continued, unmoved, to make rush-cocks, and so continued, while I withdrew, beating the dogs before me with the sketching stool.

The house that had given us shelter was old, and grey, and friendly. Its Master and Mistress were of Kerry's innermost lineage, their servants were of their tenants' families, gathered in from distant farms, as well as from the little houses that clustered by the roadside beyond the demesne wall. Our native counties, our normal duties, faded from our minds, we were steeped in Kerry and idleness. Ours was the untrammelled calm of the little dogs *en voyage*, who, while we strove with porters and packages at Mallow, sat serene on our top-coats, surveying the despised world, so that the very waiting-room woman was constrained to cry, "Annything don't throuble thim!"

Our windows looked across a wide valley to mountains, high enough to be inspiring, not so high as to preclude the hope of some day achieving their summits, and viewing thence, as we were promised, all the Kingdom of Kerry and the glory of it. A narrow river, wandered through the middle of the picture, a still river, that widened

and branched into many secret channels, before it reached the sea. From its farther bank the Slough spread, golden, and brown, and beautiful; on this side were hayfields, for in Kerry, conventions have no weight, and in August to make hay is orthodox enough; the Kingdom is a law to itself and regards not external things. We discussed the Daylight Saving Bill—which then either impended or had been imposed, I forget which—with Mag Darragh, the gentle ruler of the kitchen, an old, old woman, with a profile fine and delicate as that of an Empress on a Roman coin, and a hood of waved grey hair, and deep eyes, in which humour and melancholy contended, now one, now the other, having the mastery.

"The Lord save us, would they have people to rise in the dark?" said Mag Darragh, "It's a pity they wouldn't leave the time as God made it."

To which the voice of an underling responded plaintively, "We'll all have to get new clocks so!"

For the pilgrim and stranger no more agreeable companions could be asked for than Mag Darragh, and her underling Bridget, and their coadjutor, Joaney Crohawn, the dairy-woman, a dark giantess, with bare legs, and enormous boots, and violent views on most subjects. I remember that a discussion on the treatment of prisoners in the German Prison Camps arose one day, while we were being shown the latest pure-bred Kerry calf, a little creature like a black spaniel puppy, infinitely engaging. Various cruelties were alleged, and Joaney, who had a son in the Munsters, listened with an angry brow. Then, as further horrors were recited, she said, "And

that's what should be done to theirselves! But sure th' English is no good! I bet ye them rotten English won't murder their prisoners!"

It was another count in the long score against England.

The pilgrim and stranger, however, sees only the social aspect of Joaney and her like, and it cannot be denied that, from a more strictly domestic point of view, dealings with them are not devoid of difficulty.

It happened, some time before we came to the house, that a break in the dynasty of Bridgets had occurred, and there was a contemporary lapse in the payment of her rent by a tenant woman, one Mrs. Flib, of Bolus Head. (The name Flib was received with some legitimate surprise by the strangers, but was explained as being the local equivalent of Philip.) Mrs. Flib, recognizing in some degree the claims of her landlord, the Master of the old house, tendered, in lieu of the rent, the services of her daughter, as was an ancient accepted custom. Therefore it was that, on a dark and windy evening, Miss Flib arrived, and was interviewed by the Mistress in the shadowed kitchen, a place of mystery, with a profound furnace of glowing turf in place of the range of other lands, and dark annexes, with entrances and exits known only to the elect. Miss Flib, who was handsomely dressed in a red blouse, a purple skirt, and a gold belt, was asked by the Mistress what she was able to do. She replied, with *hauteur*, that she could do nothing.

"But you can feed hens, and pigs, and calves, surely?" said the Mistress.

Miss Flib said she never fed a calf at all.

Old Mag Darragh, wise in silence, sat by the fire, and hearkened. In the shadows Joaney

Crohawn, the dairy-woman (that splendid savage), having possessed herself of the kitchen broom, swept furiously, a recognized mark with her—we were told—of indignation and excitement. (Akin to the "Powder-Play" of the Bedouins.)

At this observation of Miss Flib's she paused in her labours, and remarked: "I suppose it was a governess she was at home!"

Old Mag Darragh, crouched by the great fire, clapped her hand to her mouth, with a convulsed invocation of the Holy and Blessed Saint Joseph. The Mistress left the kitchen with a speed that seems to have been almost indecent, and sought the Master in order to tell him that, rent or no rent, Miss Flib was impossible. The Master, it appears, answered implacably that Miss Flib must be made the best of. The Mistress, therefore, returned to the kitchen. There she found Miss Flib standing, with a foot on the seat of a chair, a mutton fist on her huge hip, while, round her, Joaney swept more furiously than ever.

"Like she'd sweep the one leg from undher her!" said old Mag Darragh in subsequent narration.

The conversation was reopened with a return to the subject of the feeding of calves.

"I daresay you could soon learn," the Mistress suggested pacifically, "and Joaney would teach you——"

"Faith I'll do no such thing!" shouted Joaney with a smashing bang of the broom against the legs of Miss Flib's chair, while that young lady with an equal fury, and—I again quote Mag—"a backward stroke of the fist, like she'd be dhrawing a sword," declared that she would learn nothing from Joaney, and would that minute go back to Bolus Head.

Bolus Head being some ten miles distant, and the night being already well advanced, her intentions were, for the moment, frustrated, but the following morning she returned to her family without opposition, since, apart from the minor objection of general incapacity, it was discovered that a hereditary feud existed between the Houses of Crohawn and Flib. The affair ended by the Master saying, gloomily, that he supposed he would now have to process the mother for the rent.

To all persons with a proper appreciation of the *nuances* of mood, there is an appeal in the arrogance and vividness of a small dog that is lacking in the larger simplicity and self-engrossment of a big one. Thus it is with the little rivers of Kerry, with their myriad changes of mood and mind, their assumption of might, their sudden passions, their faltering shallows; their fierce determination to reach the sea at a gallop, that is abandoned at the suggestion of a half-dozen of blue-grey boulders, and is transmuted into a resolve, equally irrevocable, to expand into a tiny lake that shall lie so still that it will entice the sky to repose on its breast.

One such is in my mind now. It was known to us as the Post Office River, because it met us at the door of the farmhouse that was called the Post Office (on, perhaps, the least valid grounds for the bestowal of that title in the history of Post Offices). It is at least certain that few other post offices have such a distinction as a private river, sealed to themselves, registered—the official phraseology imposes itself—in their names. To follow its course back into the country, to those hills to which, not in vain, it lifted up its eyes for help and contributions, became for us an

obsession. The source of the Nile was not more hidden and mysterious. Less so, indeed, since it has been traced and mapped, while the birthplace of the Post Office River is shown on no map, and is, I am certain, known only to the eagles, whose nests are far above it in the high places of Fermoyle or Foilclough, or to the tall yellow hare that hurled herself out of her seat in the heather, and fled up the valley, followed, frantically by two white dogs, for the moment made mad by the scent of those flying feet.

Not only in its possession of a river did that post office excel. Its Postmaster had a designation of which any postmaster might be proud, and of which few would be worthy. Conny-the-Wings, he was called, because in that land of leisure, he alone made haste. No servant of Mercury could ask for a name more musical. Also in that post office there resided as handsome a young Kerry Beagle as anyone, with eyes for such, could wish to see. Bowman was his name —a distant-mannered young hound, who dodged, nervous, and growling, among Conny-the-Wing's haycocks. His black coat shone in the sun, his tan face and legs were of as golden a chestnut as the boggy shallows in his own river, and he wore on his narrow chest a dandyish frill of white. He was built for speed, and the yellow hare would have fled something faster had he joined the white ladies in the chase.

There is a heresy which is essentially modern and English, and is born of Charity Organization Societies and Red Tape, that it is improper to give alms to beggars. Happily, in Ireland, this has gained no foothold. In the Island of Saints we are all of the camp of St. Louis, with his retinue of beggar-men, even though we do not go

as far as did the Emperors of Austria, in inflicting complimentary ablutions upon their beggars. (Nor, I am reasonably certain, would our beggars enjoy such attentions.) No company is more agreeable than that of the true beggar, he or she whose life-work is begging, whose home is on the roads, whose means of existence is centred in his or her tongue—more specially her tongue—though it was, indeed, a he-beggar who, on being asked if he were married, replied movingly :

" I'll tell ye no lie, my Lady, I am not! When I was young, I said, 'Come a day, go a day! A single life is airy!' But now I'm owld, and there is no one to my care, my Lady, and that's why I'm in this low position of life."

He called it a low position, but he lived like the King, levying his maintenance from great and small, without regard of persons, supported by an uncomplaining commonwealth. And he had had his day of single airiness, and, one may be sure, had floated in it without a care, light as a leaf. How airy would be life if one could lift a new hat from the nearest scarecrow, and leave one's outworn boots by the roadside, and go forward, content, with bare feet!

In Kerry we saw but few of his calling. There was, I remember, a little woman whom I met on the slough, walking, with the perfect poise of barefoot gait, on a narrow track through the blossoming heather and low yellow furze. There was something of the amateur about her; she was not, I think, of the stricter order of beggar. She let fall, artlessly, the information that she had gone out that morning " to thry could she meet a little petticoat," but the *rencontre* had not occurred. She did not press the point, and merely mentioned, in delicate reproach, that a certain

Mrs. O'Shea had been very good to her, and had thrated her very dacint, and had given her a nate pair o' boots, and a little inside tights.

Feeling quite unable to vie with the splendour of these gifts (whose very function—as to the latter, at least—we were unable to determine) we were grateful to her for accepting a small alternative offering.

One gloomy evening, when the mountains had turned dark as indigo, and grey rain hid the valley, a black-haired woman, very tall and erect, who might, not unsuitably, have posed as Lady Macbeth, rang the hall-door bell with conventional decorum, and asked to see the Mistress. To the Mistress she announced that she had come to her for charity.

The Mistress, scanning her with a discerning eye, said, "But you have no business coming here. You belong to Killarney!"

To which the tall beggar-woman, with splendid scorn, replied, "Sure what good is Killarney? Killarney's ate alive with beggars!"

I believe that she contributed brilliantly to the gaiety of the kitchen that dark evening—and the usually reliable testimony of long and piercing shrieks was not wanting—and I am sure that the bag she carried on her back had a good share of potatoes added to it, even though she was a trespasser upon the domain of others.

It was from Joaney Crohawn that we received the Key of the Country, in the form of a small, but wonderfully competent boy, who knew "the near way" to everywhere, and was personally acquainted with all the local bulls, their varying degrees of "crossness," and could tell to a nicety from which fields they could, or could not, "break out." He it was who introduced to

the neighbourhood the two white ladies, to whom allusion has been made, and it was no less gratifying, than it was surprising, to find that in less than a week, there was not a child, within a radius of three miles of our centre, who did not, after one heralding cry to its fellows, "The white daag-eens!" murmur obsequiously the names of Sheila and Dooley as they tripped by, aware of, yet ignoring the admiration they inspired.

Perhaps they were the more esteemed because, in Kerry, black appeared to be the prevailing colour. Black cattle on the hills, black hens and turkeys round the cabin doors; black shawls (when they were not of the abhorrent drab variety that has flowed over Ireland) over the women's heads, and blackest, and of most intense Kerry of all, the black beagles. There is in Ireland a Government Department (possibly unknown to English people) that is called The Congested Districts Board. Among its activities is the task of improving the breed of domestic animals. Premium bulls, asses, pigs, and poultry, are consigned, for breeding purposes, to qualified caretakers, and, of the various efforts in aid of Irish peasants, few have had more useful results.

Joaney Crohawn, the dairy-woman, ruled in various spheres of agriculture: dairy cows and calves were in her care, so also were the pigs and poultry, and of these, none, I imagine, appealed to so deep an enthusiasm as the poultry. It had happened, during the preceding spring, that the Mistress had been given, by her mother, a small but very select party of copper-coloured turkey-hens.

"It would be a pity not to breed from them," she said to Joaney, "I must buy a cock, and a good one."

"Do not buy a cock at all," replied Joaney, with a certain mystery.

No more was said. A few nights later, the Master and Mistress, seated, after dinner, in the drawing-room, were aware of a creeping foot on the gravel outside the window. They listened with some apprehension (for there have been quieter times in Kerry than the year 1915) and then a hand tapped on the glass. The Mistress went to the window, and, seeing only the shawled figure of a woman, she opened it. Immediately the woman flung back the shawl, and, pressing close to the window, thrust into the bosom of the Mistress an enormous turkey-cock, and vanished into the night. If the memory of a fairy turkey-cock, that haunted a certain mountain, and was said to "go coaching around annyone he'd meet," had occurred to her, it might at least have been an explanation of this portent. But that this was a material turkey-cock was apparent, since in panic that only equalled her own, he "coached" round the room, and, mounting the table, threw over the lamp, which went out. The Mistress, after a few seconds of blind and groping terror, achieved the door, and escaped, leaving the Master to compete alone with the turkey-cock. She then rushed from the house in pursuit of the shawled woman.

There was, she says, a faint young moon; in the uncut meadow there was a corncrake, rasping a serenade to his love, and also in the uncut meadow was the shawled woman, fleeing, in the teeth of all the laws of agriculture, through the long dew-laden grass; she would have told you, simply, it was "the near way."

The Mistress was too agitated to comment on this feature of the case. She tells us that when

she overtook the retreating woman all she could say was :

" In God's name, who are you ? "

" Whisht, Ma'am ! Don't say a word ! " replied the woman, " that's the Congested Bird ! Sure th' Inspector won't be in it for a month——!"

The woman was the official keeper of one of the Congested District Board's poultry stations, and was related intricately to Joaney Crohawn.

For several weeks the Congested Bird remained in Joaney's care, and was much admired by visitors. Enquiries as to whence he had come were blocked by her with the remark, cryptic, yet pregnant :

" Why then t'is the Misthress has the good Mother ! "

CHAPTER XXV

THE BLACK BEAGLES*

IT was that little boy who had been appointed unto us as both Caretaker, and Key of the Country, who made known to us, one Sunday morning, that "the Baigles would be in it after Second Mass."

I do not know how it may be now, but in August, 1915, there were not many farmers in that part of Kerry to which fate had kindly conducted Martin Ross and me, who did not keep a hound or two to hunt with the Sunday Pack. Even in the small towns there might be seen, at most of the shop doors, descendants of the

——"*black Saint Hubert's breed*
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed"—

lying about on the narrow pavements, sophisticated in unkennelled freedom as any cur-dog, and employing all the high qualities enumerated by Sir Walter Scott, in depredations on the maddened local butchers (one of whom, indeed, in a town whose identity shall not be revealed, was driven by their skilled maraudings into a fell revenge, in which the poisoned carcase of a calf took a leading part). The pure-bred Black and Tan Kerry Beagle—who is quite unconnected

* *The better part of this article is taken from the note-book of Martin Ross, and is here incorporated with my own memories.—E. Œ. S.*

with the true beagle, and is a sizeable hound, standing about twenty-three to twenty-four inches—was already, in 1915, becoming harder to find than he had been before Masters of recognized Packs in both England and Ireland had awakened to a knowledge of his merits.* But in the trencher-fed pack that we followed that Sunday afternoon, there remained still a greater number of the true "Black Baigles" than of the "bracket" (i.e. spotted) half-bred hounds, that were said to be ousting the Black and Tans from their once undisputed inheritance.

Ringlet and Gypsy were the first couple of the Trencher-feds that we met, and I well remember the thrill that shook us both on thus coming upon our first Kerry Beagle among its native mountains. I was engaged in that desultory quest of "a subject" that is so inevitable for the would-be painter of landscape, and so abhorrent to the companion of the painter. We strayed into a little field that affected to consider itself a potato garden, and was, in truth, as gorgeous as many flower gardens. It was purple with groves of loosestrife; it was set in a gold frame of rag-weed, it was plumed with red branches of dock. It seemed a pity that a potato crop should intrude in such an achievement of colour. It occupied, indeed, but a modest place in the picture, but the potato is not, at any time of its career, an ornament.

Above the field, a white gable, on the apex of a low hill, drew attention to itself, and the wanderings of the searcher tended gradually towards it. There were brown hills behind it,

* *Thanks to the kindness of Major Aubrey Wallis, M.F.H., the Woodland Pytchley, a draft of pure-bred Kerry Beagles were among the most valued hounds in my pack.—E. Œ. S.*

Photo by W. A. Rouch

KERRY BEAGLES AND E. Œ. S. AT DRISHANE, 1917

with little fields making a pale patchwork up their flanks, and, beyond these, the blue shoulders of crowded mountains, leaning in vast repose. Above them showed the prick-ears of the Reeks of Killarney, watching all.

Ringlet, the half-bred Kerry Beagle, when we first saw her, was casting a sleepless eye in the direction of the Reeks, because there was a bark in the middle distance that might or might not mean a cur-dog turning cattle. She was lying on a boggy plateau, where, among a bivouac of turf that had been "footed," i.e. propped on its ends, like piled arms, a little stack gave her delicious shelter from the thin northerly breeze. Two fat, pallid pigs lay sociably beside her in the sun; children, and a donkey with panniers, were conveying turf from the stack to the house in a lengthy, disjointed, and enormously conversational manner, involving many outside interests.

Ringlet was a "bracket" (which is Irish for spotted) beagle, dirty white, with several tan saddles. At sight of us she sprang up and wagged her stern somewhere under her body, sat down upon it, flung her white face up to heaven, and said to the Universe: "I spy strangers!"

It was a hound's voice, melodious and tragic: the tip of her stern, still faintly wagging between her forelegs, showed that in her infant heart she wanted to propitiate. Probably she was half-bred between Kerry Beagle and the old Irish white hounds, those wise, square-headed, deep-jowled, deep-tongued hounds, who are so near human that their souls survive the sifting processes of death, and there is a spirit pack of them in the County Galway (of which Martin Ross has written) that hunt themselves—for no one ever heard tell of a ghostly huntsman trying to hunt

them—with the same wilful brilliancy that was once theirs, embodied in more material form.

Ringlet's next door neighbour, Gypsy, was an older lady, of apologetic manners, and more sociable habit. She was of the orthodox black and tan colour; one of her shoulders had a pink and grey patch upon it. "Ah, not mange at all," said a friend of hers, "'Twas only where some one threw b'iling wather afther her"—evidently a not unusual occurrence, akin to, and prompted by the same motive, as the more drastic method of the butcher.

Gypsy attended her master in the cornfield where he was working, a part of her heart with him, the miraculous part, that is in love with man or woman (and in that walk of life it is chiefly man); the other part, that we dismiss with the word "instinctive," with her puppies of a month old, and between them, master and children, she travelled all day, at intervals, at a slinging gallop. When, in the late evening, a leveret broke from the dwindling square of oats, and bolted for its life, Gypsy flung herself into the pursuit with the war-cry of her race, and the leveret looked its last upon the flowing line of mountain that notched the quiet sky.

That August Sunday, of 1915, was a blazing summer day, with an easterly breeze and a fierce sun, a day, as it would seem singularly unfitted for hunting. Yet we learned that a friend, known to us only by name, but none the less friendly, Johnny-the-Post, son of Conny-the-Wings, had summoned, in our honour, to a meet, the best beagles in the country-side. After Second Mass the Hunt began to assemble. As we sat at luncheon (and such a luncheon for those about to follow hounds a-foot! Roast Kerry mutton,

small and brown, en-pastried Kerry blackberries, fat and ripe, and whipped Kerry cream, yellow and thick) we heard, far in the slough below the house, a long mellow cry, and went forth in search.

The Meet had been of an indefinite character: in fact, as far as we could learn, but two couple out of eight had not been diverted from the *rendezvous* by attractions encountered on the way to it.

"There's some of them gone west over the hill," said Conny-the-Wings, meeting us upon the road, full of affability, and of enquiries as to when we would "take" (photographically, presumably) the Boys and the Beagles.

We followed west over the hill, led by that invariable indicator (in Ireland, at least) of the presence of hounds, the barking of cur-dogs. From the hill we saw below us three or four couple of beagles, straying and poking about the outskirts of a vast stretch of bog. Two white ones were wailing and keening along a turf-cutting on a very stale line. About a dozen young men, irreproachably dressed in their Sunday best (dark blue coats and trousers, pink ties, and green caps, as to the more fashionable of the party), stood on the hill, and a few hounds were seated on the heather in front of them, watching with jealous intentness the operations of their fellows in the bog. One young man had a sort of bugle, copper-coloured, with a handle, and a red tassel, and from the hill-side he summoned the scattered hounds with broken and various blasts of two or three different notes, about a third apart. The hounds, gradually, grouped themselves all round him, and began to sing to the bugle, very nearly on the note he was blowing, which was a low one. They sat on their sterns, and put their noses in the air,

HE SUMMONED THE SCATTERED HOUNDS.

and made their mouths as round as the mouth of the bugle. It was very like women keening, and on that hill-slope, looking out to the dark sapphire sea and to the green velvet mountains across the bogland, it was of the earlier ages of the world.

There were several whitish and spotted hounds; one young hound, whose name was Colonel, was almost pure white, and there was a liver hound, and a dark tan one. The best looking of them all was the tall young black and tan dog, whom we had met at the Post Office, whose name was Bowman, Their owners stood about, and spoke in quiet voices of their respective hounds' qualities, and of their greatness, but their hounds ignored them, and appeared, like the King's Daughter, to have forgotten also their own people and their father's house, and to have thoughts only for the blower of the bugle. On that Sunday afternoon there was something grave and ritual in the ceremony.

The weather was sumptuous, as has already been said (but such weather can never be too often extolled). The lads and the hounds, their inaugural service ended, went on over the hill, and the stragglers of the pack joined them, and more young men came, as it seemed from nowhere, and followed on. The hounds drew in vain the furzy patches, and along the briary banks. The young men beat the furze bushes and brakes with long sticks, shouting; the huntsman with the bugle had a hound-language of his own. He said something that sounded like "Quacket! Quacket!" to them when he wished to summon them to him, and when he wished to make them skirt round a tract of broken rocks—as very often happened—he shouted "Rocka! Rocka!"

but he hunted them in English, and not in Irish, as we had hoped and expected.

There was nothing on the grassy hill; no hare, nor so much as what they called "a thrail." In such weather, with the grass as crisp as hot toast, and the heat making the air to ripple over the rocks, no hound, however tender his nose, could have acknowledged a line. The Hunt went downhill again to another bog, stretching away east, towards the Killarney mountains, and we pursued on, through bad going, jumping or striding from *crumpáwn* to *crumpáwn*, and I put my leg into a boghole that was like a jam-pot, and was filled with brown stuff that was like jam. I sat down and dried it in the heather, while we conversed seriously with a fat old man who was sitting there too. Near us a black and tan beagle lay in the heather, like a grouse. He had hurt his fore foot; he regarded us with suspicion, and presently rose and limped on after the pack. No one appeared to notice his absence; the young man with his bugle (who was, as we had learnt from the old man, the friendly but hitherto unknown, Johnny-the-Post) was now silent, and no one hunted the hounds. They wandered ahead at their own will, and the lads followed them anyhow.

The slough ran back illimitably into the out-stretched arms of the mountains. The near mountains were russet and gold, with patches of cobalt resting on them, like blue butterflies, cloud shadows in trance. The far mountains, towards Killarney, were lavender, and the faint wind, that blew to us from them across the slough, was warm and full of strange perfume, like the breath of a censer. The hounds were moving on faster now, and soon the old man who was sitting near us called out:

"They have her out of it, and it was time for her!"

He was ashamed of the unmannerliness of the hare, that she should have kept two strange ladies waiting for so long.

A long-drawn, melancholy cry broke forth from the beagles, as unlike the rapture of a find with foxhounds as anything that can be imagined. I thought of what had been said to me of the serenade of a lover at a lady's bower.

"Oh that owld dog!" said the complainant bitterly. "He was there last night again, and I didn't get a wink since three o'clock! I wondered was he foretelling any bad thing he was that mernful! He went away for a while, and I thought he was gone, but oh! it was then he comminced most unmarciful!"

Wailing as they ran, the beagles strung out on the line, and soon the white and *bracket* ones only were visible against the dark bog background. They went fast to the Post Office river and, crossing it, ran into bog too wet and deep for creatures less light and fleet than they to adventure into it. Their owners kept to the bits of higher ground, not interfering at all. We sat with the fat old man on a heap of rocks and watched them. There were a couple of what he called "shecks," and during one of them some kindly and festive spirit moved him to sing us a little song, to a very commonplace little ding-dong tune: but the words were not commonplace. To tell the truth, I have never solved their meaning.

"A ship in full sail, all on the wild ocean,
A fox in full chase with the goose that he stole.
I'll dhraw with my needle a map of green Erin,
The Birthplace of Valour, the Temple of Worth!"

Very soon the hounds worked back to the spot where they had first found, and they cast themselves to and fro, "making good the ground," with a beautiful and systematic industry. Again they hit the line, and ran straight across our front for the near mountain, going like a dark smoke across the slough, running strung out always, with their sustained, wailing, contralto cry, that has no hack in it, and no squeal. We watched them

"THEY HAVE HER COT!"

flit, a shadow that would have been imperceptible, save for the specks of white in it, about a quarter of the way up the mountain, and then the shadow ceased to move, and the old man said:

"They have her cot!"

Their huntsman and the field were far behind, but, immediately, men, who had been awaiting the hunt on the mountain, took the hare from the hounds (but this we heard afterwards) and drove them back with stones to their owners, below on the bog. This was, we were told, a hostile demonstration on the part of certain other

beaglers, who were at enmity with the lads gathered by Johnny-the-Post, and had been holding the hill against invaders. It seemed as though they were within their rights, since our hunters accepted their interference without resentment. We saw the hounds returning from the mountain, and we joined the group of waiting lads, and listened to the tasselled bugle sending its not displeasing voice across the slough. We all wandered back then to another valley, hunting, vaguely, as we went, and Johnny-the-Post, himself, walked with us, and told us of his hound, Bowman, and of how his sister had rared him very pettish, but that none the less he was a good dog, and a very nosy dog.

" We shuts him out o' the house at nights," said Johnny-the-Post, " and we'll hear him hunting for himself till morning." (A form of expression that does not imply any self-forgetfulness, or even absence of mind, on the part of Bowman, but merely betokens his independence of character.)

We asked about the health and general care of beagles, and were told that they were as healthy as trouts, and that they never were kept in kennels, and the puppies never had either distemper or " yellows," and that all there was to be afraid of was the danger that when they were young, and wouldn't have the sense to find their way home again, some fellows from another part of the country might come at night and steal them.

The afternoon sun was hot, and the hard going, tramping through deep heather, and sedge, or stepping unsteadily from one *crumpáwn* to another, or jumping bog-drains, was beginning to tell on us. The hounds and the country boys hunted on, ceaselessly, untiringly; we climbed

a little way up a hill-side, and lay there, listening to the mellow, melancholy voices of the beagles, that lamented all round us, for the echoes multiplied the cry, and the faint music among the hills seemed as if it never could die out. A hare was "rocked" which meant that she saved herself by getting into the heart of a great cairn of grey boulders; another, who was hunted, fitfully, for half an hour or more, proved herself in the end cleverer than all the talent arrayed against her. But she had the sun as an ally, and I think that no hounds less "nosy" than Bowman and his comrades could have even realized her existence that burning afternoon.

We crawled home at last, much spent, while the lads and the beagles worked farther and farther from us down the long valley. And as we went we recalled the experience of a youth of our acquaintance with another Southern Irish trencher-fed pack, whose hunting country lay among the smooth and civilized fields that surrounded a large town, and whose followers were better accustomed to jumping counters than bog-drains.

It chanced one holiday afternoon, to this young man to notice a gathering of men and hounds in the centre of a large walled field. It was soon apparent that this was the Town Pack, and on drawing nearer to the concourse, he found that the Hunt had resolved itself into a single and comprehensive dog-fight, in which each hound was matched by his owner against a rival, while the partizans of the respective combatants stood round and backed their fancies. The wall of the field was high and solid, and the barred iron gate, by which, presumably, the chase had entered, was shut, but how it was that the proceedings

had passed from the Mimicry of War to War itself, our young friend was unable to explain. He presently perceived the neglected hare running, unheeded, round the field, seeking a way of escape. Relying on the preoccupation of the sportsmen, he made haste to open the gate, and was pleased to see the hare—who possibly overestimated the danger of her situation—immediately whisk through it.

The battle continued to rage, and the young man followed the hare.

CHAPTER XXVI

A MEMORY AND AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THERE is a subject which, in another volume of Martin Ross's and my work* I have touched on, fleetingly, only just enough to scandalize a friendly reviewer or two, and, possibly, a few of our readers, but enough, also, to evoke a good number of interested and interesting letters. Now, not a year since the death of a cousin, of whose uniquely gifted personality I wish, very humbly and diffidently, to say a little, I find myself confronted once more with this controversial subject of Spiritualism. I have no wish for controversy. I do not grudge to those who sit in the Seats of the Scornful their easy-chairs. For me, and for those whose numbers are every day increasing, I believe there is a freer air, a more certain faith, a going forward through falling barriers—we do not covet the easy-chairs. Let us leave it at that.

* * * * *

One of the very first things that I can remember is staying at Castle Haven Rectory, on a visit, while my mother was away. The Rector was my mother's uncle, Charles Bushe, eldest son of Chief Justice Bushe. He had married my mother's step-sister, Emmeline, one of the elders of the great Coghill sisterhood of ten, and she,

* *Stray-aways.*

in addition to being my aunt, and my great-aunt, was also my Godmother.*

I think I was six years old. Would that I had been old enough to appreciate the privilege that was mine of being in such a household of bright spirits! I recognize the futility of assertions, but for very many people, and especially for the elder members of the Irish Bar, it will, I know, be enough to say that Seymour Bushe was the youngest son of the house, the enchanting "Saymore Bosh," the most brilliant man of his time, who relighted the flashing torch which his grandfather, "The Chief," had laid down some thirty years earlier, and was in the direct line of descent from the classic wits and orators of the great times of Plunket, and Grattan, and Curran.

I don't think it is too much to say that in no other house in Ireland could more originality, and brilliance, and good looks, have been found. Long after they had left the Rectory and West Carbery for ever, an old woman said of them to me:

"They were grand ladies! And each of them had their own share of beauty!"

But at six years old these high qualities passed by me as the idle wind. I was far more interested in the cross-bred and cross terrier, Smut (who favoured me, as I felt, with such wondrous condescension), and in the little stream at the foot of the flower garden, where, with sufficient assiduity, one could get as wet as one could on the strand at the foot of the Glen, and much dirtier. I know not how old my cousins may then have been (I agree with my Uncle Kendal in preferring "to play the Ostrich Trick" with

* *For a brain-turning definition of the precise relationship I may offer the note on page* 66, "*Irish Memories.*"

regard to ages) but one of them, the youngest and prettiest, was receiving regular lessons from the eldest, the most learned and serious, and by that wicked pupil (who caused the young to go out of her way to do evil), I was employed to convey Smut to the schoolroom, and to push him under the crinoline of the instructress (who both feared and hated him), the result being upheaval, and the end of lessons for that morning.

Lessons at the Rectory appear to have pursued a course quite of their own, a course that, in striking anticipation of modern theories of education, would seem to have been laid down by the taught rather than the teacher. I believe Constance will forgive me if I repeat one instance —the only one, unhappily, that I can remember —of her own methods with one of her instructors.

The Rector employed the schoolmaster of the church school to instruct his children in certain subjects, which included writing, spelling, and composition. The master's name was Thomas Fuller, and Constance's composition, continuous from week to week, took the form of a biography of a monster of wickedness, who was alluded to throughout the blood-stained chronicle as :

"The Man, T. F. !"

"Young ladies ! Young ladies ! Oh fie ! Oh fie ! Miss Constance, Miss Constance ! I wonder at you !" the Man T. F. would expostulate, helplessly, and in vain.

Alas, that that priceless record of his crimes has not been preserved !

* * * * *

It was in that now far-away summer, when I was six years old, that Constance, second of the

daughters of the house (whose full name, it may be mentioned, since her initials are familiar to many, was Constance, Theodora, Antoinette), first, of her kindness, took notice of me. She took me into her care; I slept in her room, and I remember awaking one night with a light in my eyes, and finding that she was making a drawing of me; the only time, I expect, when she could trust to the model to keep still.

The Rectory, at about this time, was the focus and the gathering-place for the enquirers, headed by my Uncle Joscelyn, into the mysteries of Spiritualism, and Constance was the source, the fount from which the energizing power flowed. I have elsewhere told of the small and devoted table that, like Mary's Little Lamb, would follow Constance from place to place. (I cannot vouch for the strict accuracy of this story, but I think it is approximately true, due allowance being made for a quality in story-telling inherited from my great-grandmother, Nancy Crampton, and known in the family as "Crampton dash.") In those days little was known of methods and conditions, and after a time the manifestations from the unknown became so persistent, knockings in the walls, and disturbances of whose import the enquirers had no key, that Constance, of whom the little table had fondly rapped out that she was "The Darling of the Spirits," became disquieted, and taking her hands once and for all from the little table, left it in bereavement, until, in the fullness of time, my Uncle Kendal enlisted it, with Cameron and me as his instruments, to further his researches in the absorbing subject.

Perhaps this deliberate withholding by Constance of her occult powers, and the consequent accumulation and storage of force, had the effect

of intensifying her gift for inspiring affection, devotion, reverence, an adoration that might often be said absolutely to have grovelled. One laughed at her for her troops of worshippers; one grumbled at their innumerableness, their eternal presence, their immutable resolve to sit at her feet, and stay there. But that, possibly, was because one was of the company, and two of a trade don't agree—let alone twenty—or two hundred, more or less!

Constance was one of the elect in whom is felt to be, beyond yea or nay, that oft-disputed quality, genius. It rested on her brow, it lighted her eyes; one felt it in the richness of her laugh, and knew it in the comprehension of her sympathy. Her face, fragile and delicate as it was, none the less brought to mind, in the strong characterization of the features, the stern profile of Savonarola, but etherialized, and, in an instant, transformed to sweetness by her smile. She would speak of herself as "this many-wintered crow," but no winter knew how to bring age to her immortal youth of heart.

She was a delightful painter, who might, but for the physical limitations imposed by almost constant ill-health, have been a great one; a caricaturist, brilliant in her gift of seizing a likeness, and armed with a flawless sense of humour; a musician in her love of the best in music, an artist in words, and a connoisseur of humour to whom one brought a good story with the certainty "that there it could not withered be" by lack of appreciation. She, almost alone of her generation, as far as my knowledge goes, could arrange flowers with the feeling for form, and colour, and spirit, that is so precious a gift, and was, before Japan came to enlighten Europe,

so seldom bestowed. And there never was anyone who knew so well how to express gratitude gracefully and graciously, which is a matter less easy of accomplishment than the average thanksgiver realizes.

But all this rich endowment, and specially the gift that I think she valued most, Painting, was robbed of full fruition—in this sphere, at all events—by the fatality of ill-health. Illness, first of those whom she loved most, later, herself. When comparative immunity came, it came too late to give scope to her powers. But perhaps so incomparable a gift for friendship as hers, found through this limitation its fulfilment. Sympathy, perception, wisdom, humour, all flowered in the life that was for the most part, and specially in later years, one of forced inaction. Her sofa in the flat in Wynnstay Gardens, became a central point, a place of counsel and refreshment, a haven of peace, for everyone who knew her. She was ageless and timeless, as one believes angels are, a spirit so rare and enchanting that it seemed as if Death could never touch her, because she had already put off all that was not purely spiritual.

To read her letters, in their intense individuality, is for me, to have a vision of her, moving tranquilly, and with a sort of unconscious dignity, about her charming drawing-room, arranging the flowers that, possibly, someone of us had sent her from Ireland, dressed in what she called "the weird garments" that she devised and made for herself (being as clever with a needle as with a pen or a pencil) because no dressmaker's soul could expand sufficiently to accept so total a departure from any known fashion. They suited her as no ordinary clothes could have done. I

daresay that there are many London people who, without having known her, remember, at Private Views and Classical Concerts, the tall slight figure, with its air of distinction, dressed in the long dark cloak, and the refined intellectual face under the large hat with the drooping brim. It is not given to many to be lawgivers in fashion to themselves, without looking either eccentric, dowdy, or absurd.

I have a letter that she wrote to Martin and me, and even though to quote it lays us open to a charge of self-complacency, C. T. A. B.'s description of her afternoon party shall not be wasted on that account.

The letter was written not long after the publication of *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.* She begins by telling us of the success that the book was having, and goes on to say that a lady, whom, I imagine, she knew but slightly, had invited her to make the acquaintance of

> "A certain Mr. A. Z., who describes himself as an author and lecturer, and had announced that he wished to meet me on the strength of my being yours and Martin's cousin, and vicariously I bore a weight of adulation! It was a studio party. A number of people were there when I arrived, to whom I was introduced.
>
> 'This is Miss Bushe! a Cousin of the Celebrated Authors of the Irish R.M.!'
>
> But Mr. A. Z. had not yet appeared. I was conducted to a sort of throne, beside which was a lesser seat of honour. This was arranged for Mr. A. Z., and the hostess announced,
>
> 'Whoever is sitting in that seat when Mr. A. Z. arrives, will have to give it up, for he is coming here Expressly to see Miss Bushe!'

I felt enveloped in a false halo, and with difficulty compelled myself to remain enthroned. Presently the great man appeared, and when I saw him all awe and reverence disappeared. He was a reincarnation of old Dan Mahony, who used to drive our inside-car at the Rectory, long ago! Just the same red bottle-nose, and much the same voice. He bounded into the lesser throne, and immediately began a string of 'Good Stories' —most annoying, because he is one of the people who put their face almost touching one's own, and so I lost the point of the stories in my endeavours to avoid the point of that bulbous red nose. The stories were all concluded with

'You'll tell that to your cousins, won't you?' I said, 'Yes,' but I lied. I had to lie, for I don't remember one of them!

And all because of that Red Nose!"

Although, for the last forty years of her life her home was in London, she never forgot her Irish birth and upbringing. In a letter in which she alludes to one of our books, she says:

"I am glad that you insist on the idealism of the Irish, and their need of some object of adoration, That has never been fostered by England, and it would have been a powerful asset. But the creatures! How will they ever understand us? They who have no answering quality, and whose utmost effort of comprehension is usually summed up in, 'You are mad!' . . . I only wish I *could* go over and 'revisit my natal bower,' as old Mrs. Kidd described my appearance in the village, on one occasion, after a long absence, but old Age and ofttimes

infirmities forbid. . . . I have lost all confidence in my body. It has played me so many unexpected tricks during the last three years that I never know what it is going to be up to next. So I dare not try experiments, and the only peace is to let the creature be as quiet as it appears to desire—clinging like a mollusc to the sofa—and send the astral body off on little larks where it likes ! "

In the spring of 1894 I was going to Paris to work at Délécluse's studio, and I wrote to Constance, and begged her to come with me and work with me there. This was her answer :

" If I were twenty years younger than I am I would join you and go to Paris, but *now*, what is the use ? Before I had learnt to draw a hand properly I should be as old as Gladstone, and have spent my last days in discomfort and fruitless strivings after an unattainable ideal ! Whatever small energy the battle of life has left in me has been eaten by microbes, there is nothing left but a little skin and bone and a modicum of flabby muscle. . . . This seems to have been for me the most curious impersonal winter. Constance is asleep or dead, and Theodora and Antoinette are working the ship. They are quite different people. I don't know anything about them—excepting that they are exceedingly dull. Neither of them care a bit about Art and scarcely know how to hold a brush. They are simply germs, and what else could they be after so many years of unrecognized individuality ?

All the spring flowers are coming up here, but the air on this North-East coast is *very* keen. It withers this delicate tropical plant

which saw the sun first in a Southern clime. All forms of cold are *abhorrent*, except an ice on a hot day, and I believe that is very bad for the stomach. . . . You see T. and A. are not good for much, so they had better stop. Much love to all.

Ever yours,

(c.) T. A. B."

* * * * *

There had been for me a time, such a time as the dark years of the War have brought to many, when it seemed that I was proving the truth of the words :

". . . . *if I no more should see*
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?"

I stayed then with Constance for a time, but I was at home in Ireland again when, unexpected and unsolicited, and by the hand of a friend, the first messages came to me from Martin Ross, messages that were of their very essence, their own assurance. And they have not ceased. I do not speak of this without reluctance, but I think acknowledgment of a great mercy and privilege should not be shirked.

In 1917 *Irish Memories* was published, and I told Constance what seems so incredible to some, and is to me the most natural thing in the world, that Martin's mind, blended with mine, no less now than in the past, had aided, and made suggestions, taking, as ever, full share—and sometimes, I daresay, more than full share—in the

task in hand. Constance, who knew and understood everything, wrote :

> " To continue to work thus with Martin makes the wonderful intercourse still more firm and real. It is delightful to think she is sharing the pleasure of your work, and has herself a part in it. I have always thought that ' every good gift cometh down from above.' We say, ' It came into my mind.' But where from ? Those inspirations reach us through ministering spirits. . . . *Of course*, I can understand what this means to you, and it seems a very special ' way of escape that you may be able to bear it.' "

Dear, delightful Constance ! The inadequacy of words to express what she was to her friends, no one knows better than I. The unshaken serenity, the unfailing sympathy, the indomitable spirit, and the gay humour, that were inspirations for so many, never, to the very last, failed her. She passed as she had lived, supremely Captain of her soul, ready, and satisfied to go.

ENVOI

THE wheels turn on, and fresh tracks are traced; but the wheels turn more slowly now that there is only one horse at the pole. I am quite sure that to have written much that has been said here, and, specially, to have told of those last perfect weeks in Kerry, would not have been possible, for more reasons than one, without the help of the comrade who has gone through my life with me, and has never failed me.

What has been written, and what may, in the future, still be written, has owed, and will owe, if not its existence, certainly whatever it may have of life, to her inspiration. I recur to this point with no wish to provoke argument or opposition, only to clear myself to my own conscience either of taking more than my share, or, which would be equally serious, of cowardice.

I know very well that this is, essentially, my own affair, and might, as I have said, be left at that. But I let it stand because it seems to me that among these memories that I have retraced, this is, perhaps, a track that

> *"Some forlorn and ship-wrecked brother*
> *Seeing, shall take heart again."*

Sport & General Press Agency, Ltd.

THE WEST CARBERY FOXHOUNDS

A Meet at the Clock Tower, Skibbereen

APPENDIX I

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY WITH THE WEST CARBERY FOX-HOUNDS (1914)

BY MARTIN ROSS

THE newspaper posters outside the shops in the square are ablaze with political announcements of the utmost moment; Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Redmond are offered, in letters of varying length, for the consideration of the public. The public turns to them the calves of its legs, ranging itself round the square in close formation, and devotes itself to the consideration of the things that matter.

It is the twenty-sixth of December, in England known as Boxing Day, but in Ireland as "St. Stephen's Day," a holy day and a holiday of the first importance. In addition to these things it is dedicated to a meet of the West Carbery Foxhounds at the Clock Tower, Skibbereen, Co. Cork. There is a long procession of people moving through the town to the great grey chapel above the river; women in dark blue cloaks with monkish hoods, solid whiskered men, also in dark blue; groups of girls in black shawls worn over their heads in Eastern fashion, and held so as to cover the mouth, and other groups of young ladies for whom Western fashion has done its worst. The sportsmen in

the square have been to early Mass, and the day spreads before them as empty and as sunshiny as the blue sky that is reflected in the puddles of last night's rain.

From a narrow street comes a splashing trample of horses' feet, a paddling of hounds, a thudding rush of barefooted boys, and the classic pageant of Fox-hunting takes the stage with the gravity and decorum that befits its ancient traditions. Men and boys hive in round the hounds and horses, and, with the expressionless countenance and nimble glance perfected in many fairs, absorb every detail. This is a crowd of talkers, of people who form opinions swiftly and as swiftly impart them, and to be without an opinion about a hound or a horse would be unthinkable here. To these gifts a lenient Providence has added that of lightning utterance; to catch one of these darting phrases is like locating the King in the three-card trick.

Serene in his unchallenged supremacy sits Bob Metherell the Huntsman, while the wild-fire murmur plays round him and his charges. The huntsman is everywhere the man of the hour; in Ireland he is, as often as not, an Englishman, which adds to his mystery, and, in a certain unconfessed sense, to his greatness. He does not, as a rule, understand what they are saying; he does not even wish to do so, which, in itself, is impressive. The Master, Miss Edith Somerville, is by no means English; her grandfather was master of the West Carberies in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, and has sat on his horse in the square in Skibbereen, with his pack about him, waiting, like her, to give the word to move on.

In honour of the holiday the late-comers

have been given ten minutes' law, while the Hon. Sec. takes up a special Christmas "Cap" for the Fowl Fund.

The Master gives "the little look across the crowd" that, in this case, means "Move on"; the line of critics yields to let the Hunt go, and the Field, that has been slowly heaping itself up on the outskirts, comes to its own and falls into place behind the Hounds. The Huntsman and the First Whip (an amateur) are Englishmen, but the useful and competent horses that carry the Hunt Staff were bred in the pastures of Munster, and the Second Whip and the Field is as Irish as they, from the half-dozen or so of ladies, the soldier or two on leave, the farmers, and the schoolboys home for the holidays, to the young men from the town, true sportsmen these last, who come out hunting in the teeth of difficulties, on anything that will carry them, whether it be the cob, short of work, soft as butter and fresh as Cork butter; the lethargic mare, taken, like Cincinnatus, from the plough; the three-year-old of emerald greenness, or veterans, such as I have heard described as "the latter end of a car-horse."

Strung out in twos and threes, interspersed with panting motors and crammed governess-carts and outside-cars swinging in the ruts, the Hunt moves at a steady jog along the roomy old Cork coach-road, fenced with green banks of all varieties of that quality known as "jumpable," or loose walls, or strange blends of the two, where the stones shove their way through the grassy top of the bank, or heavy sods roof an unstable pile of rubble. There is no more monotony in West Carbery fences than in the minds of their makers, and the end of an iron

bedstead filling a gap is an everyday occurrence that merely illustrates the Irishman's capacity for using the wrong thing in the right place.

Hedges are not fashionable, though here and there the willing fuchsia has been encouraged, and in summer hangs its red tassels elegantly over the potato-field. On the hillsides the country boys and their dogs lie out in holiday idleness, leisurely, yet alert, tracking the progress of the hunt towards the long oak wood that is to be first draw. The Huntsman eyes their dogs with misgiving, and a farmer informs him, for his consolation, that it was only yesterday he met a lad, riding a mule, "and he having a dead fox slung across his withers. 'Tis what they do," says the farmer, parenthetically, "they has a couple of tarriers and a greyhound. 'We had a great hunt!' says me lad to me, 'he didn't go but three sthretches before they had him cot!'"

The Huntsman jumps a "stone gap" and canters towards the end of the wood, the hounds race into covert, the little chestnut mare hops over the boundary bank after them, and the red coat is soon out of sight among the grey and brown oak branches. The Whips gallop away to their respective points, the Master moves forward in heart-to-heart converse with Patsey Dawley, the earth-stopper, and the long draw begins. The riders straggle along the *bohireen* to their appointed place at the top of the covert; the call of the Huntsman comes fitfully up in the fresh west wind, a tenor note answers at last, and the hearts of the wise are glad because it is the voice of Fencer, who always tells the truth. Fencer is one of the old black and tan breed of Saint Hubert, that is believed to have

been imported from France to Ireland about the middle of the seventeenth century, and whose descendants are now to be found not only among the trencher-fed hounds in the Kerry mountains, and in the long-pedigreed pack in the Scarteen Kennels, but also, thanks to the enterprise of the Master of the Woodland Pytchley and his confidence in their high qualities, are lording it in the English shires.

The tenor note is joined by others, and grows to an uproar, travelling along the covert through the low oak trees. Will "*he*" break at the foot of the hill in the marshy fields and run south over the "Cael," i.e. the deep draining-ditch below the wood, or will he, like King David, lift up his eyes to the northern hills and realize that from thence will come help?

On the green slope that faces the covert men and boys are standing in close rows, as in the gallery of a theatre, watching, with that inconceivable sight that could view away a shrew-mouse, for the first appearance of the leading actor of the play. . . . A burst of yells, worthy of the wildest moments of the French Revolution, comes from the hill-top, followed by the tutored scream of the First Whip. A couple of young countrymen dash along the *bohireen*, running with the ease and speed of their own long-legged terriers.

"This way! This way! We'll show ye the passage! The bounds fence is made up very wicked!"

The Field takes the hint and presently is out on the open mountain-side, with the hounds struggling up the steep ascent in passionate cry. They drive along the lofty ridge for a mile or more. The riders can see every hound with what

attention they can spare from the selection of their own course. Then the pack turns sharply and dives over the all but perpendicular southern face of the hill, and disappears in dense furze.

"To ground, of course!" says the hunt pessimist, of which one or more is attached to every hunt.

But up out of the gorse come the hounds again, with Lucifer booming his big note in the forefront, and crossing the bows of the Field, they run down over long rough fields into open country. Thundering in their wake come the riders, the pullers pulling their worst, the non-pullers receiving a full measure of admonition. It is all down hill, and the drops are heavy, and the holiday riders are seen in unsuspected quarters of their mounts, returning to the saddle by devious ways. Looking from the top of Cullinagh Hill there is green country below, pleasantly fenced with banks and dotted with slated white farm-houses, the best bit of going in the district, and therefore only selected by the fox when no alternative is his. Expert in the problems of scent, he plays his game coolly, and half-way down the hill he makes a sudden "jink" round an immense rock and faces the up-grade again, gliding through the heather with the ease of perfect condition. The hill-fox of West Carbery is a foeman worthy of anyone's steel, and the riders know it to their cost, as they also face the hill and toil back by zigzags to the mountain-top that they left so light-heartedly half an hour ago. Back they hurry along the crest of the great hill, with good galloping ground here, and precarious bog there, over a stout pole into the *bohireen*, out of it again over an ugly "stone gap," back again over the bounds

ditch (leaving a considerable share of the Field on its hither side) across the Cael—where a further share cease from troubling—and then, after a fierce fifteen minutes over grass, the end comes, and the fox disappoints his followers and saves himself by going to ground in one of the many subterranean ways of an enormous earthen *rath*. Speculation as to what his point had been elicits from one authority a pronouncement as firm as it is cryptic, that his point had been "a part of a circle." Another claims that from the top of the "Big Hill aisht" he has seen "every lep ye threw" and gives it as his view that the fox had no point at all. "But sure," he adds, "what signifies a point? Ye had a nice chase!" His idea evidently coinciding with Euclid's, that a point is that which hath no magnitude.

Patsey the Earth-stopper comes up at the end, when a select and very hot company is assembled in the trench round the ancient fortress, and the hounds are vainly storming in the jungle growth that Time has added to its defences.

"Could we get him out, Patsey?" asks a young soldier, home from France on leave.

"Yerrah ye could not! That Fort is the same as if it was mined by the Germans!" replies Patsey, playing up to his audience. "I tell ye now that fox is a Holy Fright!"

Which settles the question.

The Holy Fright is left, like Sir John Moore, "alone with his glory," and the Hunt moves on to the next draw.

APPENDIX II

EXECUTION OF INDIAN PRINCES BY CAPTAIN HODSON

ALTHOUGH all the circumstances of this incident are now well known, it may be added that in many conversations on the subject, and, notably, in discussing it with a relative of Captain Hodson's, Colonel Coghill laid special stress on the fact that Captain Hodson had no alternative but to shoot the Princes on the spot, as, on their and their army's realizing their strength as compared with that of his small force, they prepared to escape; and if, at that critical moment, Captain Hodson had deferred their execution, even by an instant, the results would have been as disastrous as far-reaching.

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